MOTHER GOOSE DRAMATIZED

Price, 50 Cents

MARCH BROTHERS
PUBLISHERS
208, 210, 212 Wright Avenue
LEBANON, OHIO

MOTHER GOOSE DRAMATIZED

By

SOMEPLE

MARCH BROTHERS, Publishers
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Old Mother Goose	5
Three-Score Miles and Ten	25
Cock Robin	32
The Old Woman and Her Pig	40
Curly Locks	48
Three Little Kittens	53
Over the Hills and Far Away	57
Bye, Baby Bunting	68
The Ginger-Bread Man	72
I Had a Little Nut Tree	84
Twinkle-Twinkle	101
Nanny Etticoat	106

FULL descriptions of all costumes and make-ups are given herein. If, however, our customers prefer, we can supply Masks and Costumes representing the various Mother Goose characters at reasonable prices.

Masks to represent any of the Animals or Birds will be supplied for 30 cents each, or $3.00 per dozen, postpaid.

Costumes for any of the characters mentioned can be supplied. Order children's costumes by age—8, 10 or 12 years, price $2.50 each, postpaid. Order adults' costumes by size—34, 36, 38 or 42, price $3.00 each, postpaid. Since we do not carry all of these in stock, many will have to be made-to-order. Kindly allow from ten days to two weeks for the goods to reach you.

Materials suitable for making costumes, such as Crepe and Tissue Papers, Gold and Silver Papers, Tinsel and other ornaments, are listed in our catalog and will be sent promptly upon receipt of the order.

MARCH BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
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Old Mother Goose

A unique little play in one scene for about thirty children. May be given out-of-doors if liked. The time is a Saturday morning in May.

CHARACTERS

Girls

- Old Mother Goose, the tallest girl,
- Jill,
- Margery Daw,
- Jenny,
- Betty Blue,
- Mary,
- Elsie Marley, taller than the rest,
- Daffydowndilly,
- Little Miss, Pretty Miss, and
- Pussy Cat.

Boys

- The Crooked Man,
- Jack, as tall as Jill,
- Peter Piper,
- Simple Simon,
- Johnny Green, a little boy,
- Johnny Stout, a tall, fat boy,
- Tom Tinker,
- Jack Horner, a plump little boy,
- Baa, Baa, Black Sheep,
- Humpty Dumpty, a boy with a round face, and
- All the king's Horses and all the king's Men, a group of about six boys.

Boys or girls—Three Blind Mice, all of a size.

COSTUMES

Old Mother Goose has on a pointed hat and an outlandish dress, as pictures show her. She has a broomstick mounted with a large, white gander's head, and white, outstretched wings.

Jill, Margery Daw, Jenny, and Mary have on pinafores. Jill is barefooted and has a sunbonnet hanging down her back. Margery Daw has a cat's cradle on her fingers. Jenny has a basket half full of chips. Mary has a slate under one arm and a wooly, white lamb under the other—or after her she draws by a string a lamb on wheels.

Betty Blue is in a blue, holiday dress and has on only one slipper. Mostly she hops about on her one foot in the slipper.

Elsie Marley is very much dressed up and powdered and frizzed and she has a vanity case, which she uses every once in a while.

Daffydowndilly has on a short, green dress (made of crepe paper or cheesecloth), scalloped around the bottom of the sleeves and skirt, over a longer, yellow petticoat. Her stockings are yellow and she wears a little green cap shaped like a lily upsidedown.

Little Miss, Pretty Miss has curls and wears a pretty dress, slippers, and a flower-wreathed, shade hat. She has a tiny bell in her pocket.

Pussy Cat has on a gray suit made like a sleeping garment with a hood attached at the neck, ears standing up on top. A tail, a piece of rope, wired, padded, and wound with the gray material, is tacked in place behind. Black lines are drawn from her mouth for whiskers. She walks on her "hind legs."

The Crooked Man has on a violet shirt, a spotted tie, a red vest, blue, knee breeches, and striped, green and white stockings (or any other odd combination of bright colors). Everything he has on is pulled askew, his tie is almost under one ear, his vest but-

tons are awry, his stockings are twisted, etc. The crown of his felt hat is crazily crushed over to one side. He holds his neck, body, and arms as crookedly as he can and he walks crookedly. He has a battered sixpence (a round of cardboard covered with silver paper).

Jack, Peter Piper, Simple Simon, Johnny Green, and Johnny Stout are barefooted and have on overalls and big straw hats. Simple Simon's overalls and hat are very old and ragged. Peter Piper has a peck measure of green peppers. They may be made of green paper.

Tom Tinker and Jack Horner have on ruffled, white shirts under little Eton jackets and have jaunty little caps on their heads. Tom Tinker has a wooly dog either under his arm or on wheels by a string. Jack Horner has a fat, saucer pie with raisins in it.

Baa, Baa, Black Sheep is in a black sleeping garment with attached hood, ears standing out at the sides. He has three bags of wool over his shoulder. He walks on his "hind legs."

Humpty Dumpty is in a white, baglike suit of tissue paper, gathered up around his neck and knees and inflated to make him look like an egg. On his head is a scarlet skullcap, much too small for him.

All the king's Horses and all the king's Men are boys in gaudy, gilt-trimmed, scarlet uniforms, and caps turned up with a feather; astride sticks mounted with horses' heads. The heads may be made of cardboard, colored, and nailed to the ends of the sticks. Reins are fastened about their necks. The boys have swords made of cardboard and covered with silver paper.

Three Blind Mice are in gray suits similar to Pussy Cat's. They have ears and chopped-off tails. They keep their eyes almost shut and keep hold of one another's hands, the two on the outside extending their hands to feel their way.

SETTING

The stage has two entrances, one in the nearer, left corner, and the other to the right. The left has steps before it and it is the door into Old Mother Goose's house. Flowering vines are twined about it. Along the rest of the left wall of the stage a high wall or fence extends. If possible, the stage is converted into a hill sloping up to the right entrance, in which there is a crooked stile. This hill is Pippin Hill. (If the play is given in the open, the hill may be a natural slope. In this case, it leads up to the back of the stage instead of to the right.) The ground is littered with sticks, stones, and leaves, and clumps of bushes and flowers line the path up the hill or bank the back of the stage. At the top of Pippin Hill is a rustic well.

SCENE

[*Jenny is picking up chips about the steps and putting them in her basket. Jack Horner sits in the corner made by the wall and the steps, pulling raisins out of his pie and eating them. Three Blind Mice sit in a row on the steps. Humpty Dumpty sits on the wall, dangling his legs. Pussy Cat is in the well, only her ears showing over the top. She meows occasionally. Johnny Green is leaning over the side of the well, watching her. As the curtains are drawn apart, Elsie Marley saunters out of the house, yawning and rubbing her eyes. Then she powders her nose. All the others, except Old Mother Goose, Little Miss, Pretty Miss, Daffydowndilly, The Crooked Man, Johnny Stout, and All the king's Horses and all the king's Men, are playing together at the foot of Pippin Hill.*]

PETER PIPER [*pointing his finger at Elsie Marley*]: Ten o'clock, Elsie Marley, and we've got our Saturday-morning tasks all done, and you've only just got up!

HUMPTY DUMPTY:

Elsie Marley has grown so fine,
She won't get up to feed the swine;
She lies in bed till half past nine—
Ay! truly she doth take her time!

ELSIE MARLEY [*disdainfully*]: Don't mention swine, Humpty Dumpty! Anyway, I am fifteen now and you are all only little children.

[*Meanwhile, Daffydowndilly has come dancing over the stile and down the hill, followed more slowly by The Crooked Man.*]

TOM TINKER [*as Daffydowndilly approaches them*]:

Daffydowndilly
Has come up to town
In a yellow petticoat
And a green gown!

ELSIE MARLEY [*circling around Daffydowndilly to look at her gown*]: How pretty your gown is, Daffydowndilly, and so fashionable, too! The very latest thing this spring is green sepals and red or yellow petals. Which modiste did you go to?

DAFFYDOWNDILLY: Madame ——. But what ails Betty Blue [*pointing to her*]?

MARY:

Little Betty Blue
Lost her holiday shoe!

BAA, BAA, BLACK SHEEP:

What can little Betty do?

DAFFYDOWNDILLY:

Give her another
To match the other,
And then she may walk in two!

MARY: But where can we get another to match the other to give her, Daffydowndilly?

DAFFYDOWNDILLY: Why,—why,— Where can we? [*Spying Mary's slate.*] What are you doing with your slate on a Saturday morning, Mary?

BETTY BLUE:

Mary has a little lamb,
  Its fleece is white as snow;
And everywhere that Mary goes,
  The lamb is sure to go.

He followed her to school one day;
  That was against the rule;
It made the children laugh and play
  To see a lamb at school.

And so the teacher turned him out,
  But still he lingered near,
And waited patiently about
  Till Mary did appear.

Then he ran to her, and laid
  His head upon her arm,
As if he said, "I'm not afraid—
  You'll keep me from all harm."

"What makes the lamb love Mary so?"
  The eager children cry.
"Oh, Mary loves the lamb, you know."
  The teacher did reply.

And you each gentle animal
  In confidence may bind,
And make them follow at your will,
  If you are only kind.

MARY [*patting her lamb*]: That was Friday, and while the children laughed and played I could not work my sums for Monday, so I brought my slate home and have been doing them this morning while Peter Piper picked his peck of pickled peppers.

THE CROOKED MAN [*approaching them, holding up his sixpence*]: See what I found against the crooked stile up on Pippin Hill!

MARGERY DAW:

There was a crooked man, and he went a crooked mile,
He found a crooked sixpence against a crooked stile!

BAA, BAA, BLACK SHEEP [*coming forward, pointing to Simple Simon*]:

Simple Simon met a pieman
  Going to the fair;
Said Simple Simon to the pieman,
  "Let me taste your ware."

Said the pieman to Simple Simon,
  "Show me first your penny;"
Said Simple Simon to the pieman,
  "Indeed I have not any."

Mister Wryman, give Simple Simon
  Your sixpenny to buy,
When Simple Simon meets the pieman
  Next time, a whole, big pie!

THE CROOKED MAN: Nay, nay, Baa, Baa, Black Sheep!

Let Simple Simon go to look
  If cents grow on a thicket;
And if he finds one on a branch,
  Let Simple Simon pick it!

[*Simple Simon goes to look for a cent and returns to the group a while later, shaking his head. The Crooked Man tosses up his sixpence.*]

The first to name
A merry game
  Shall have this bent sixpenny!
Our tasks are done,
We've time for fun—

HUMPTY DUMPTY [*interrupting and pointing to Jenny*]:

Except for poky Jenny!

MARGERY DAW: See-saw!

[*The Crooked Man starts to toss his sixpence to Margery Daw, who holds out her hands to catch it, and then instead he puts it in his pocket.*]

THE CROOKED MAN:

Tee-hee! I reckon I need my crooked sixpence myself
To buy a crooked cat, which will catch a crooked mouse,
And we'll all live together in a little crooked house.

MARGERY DAW: See-saw, anyway!

THE CROOKED MAN:

See-saw, Margery Daw!

[*He shakes his finger at Jenny.*]

Jenny shall have a new master;
She shall have but a penny a day,
Because she can't work any faster!

Ten o'clock of a Saturday morning in May and her basket only half full of chips to light Old Mother Goose's fire!

[*He turns to Baa, Baa, Black Sheep.*]

Baa, baa, black sheep,
Have you any wool?

BAA, BAA, BLACK SHEEP:

Yes, marry, have I,
Three bags full;
One for my master,
And one for my dame,
But none for the little boy
Who cries in the lane.

[*He indicates which bag is for each as he mentions him, shaking his head at the last two lines.*]

THE CROOKED MAN: Well, then, Baa, Baa, Black Sheep, when you take your bag of wool to your master, just ask him politely if he wouldn't like a little maid, who is not overly swift, to card it and dye it and weave it into a length of cashmere for his wife, your dame, and if he nods his head you shall show Jenny the way to her new master's house Monday after school.

TOM TINKER: Let's see-saw! Baa, Baa, Black Sheep doesn't have to set out for his master's house till after dinner.

DAFFYDOWNDILLY [*looking around*]: Where's a board?

[*All turn their heads this way and that, looking around.*]

HUMPTY DUMPTY [*looking behind him*]: There's a board over the wall.

MARY: Who can climb over to get it?

BETTY BLUE: Jack Horner, you climb over.

[*Jack Horner shakes his head, too intent on pulling a raisin out of his pie for words.*]

PETER PIPER [*pointing his finger at him*]:

Little Jack Horner
Sits in a corner,
  Eating a Christmas pie;
He puts in his thumb
And he pulls out a plum,
  And says—

JACK HORNER [*putting the plum he has pulled out into his mouth*]:

What a good boy am I!

MARGERY DAW: Oh, come on, Jack Horner! Put your Christmas pie on the steps. The Three Blind Mice won't touch it while you are over the wall. It's too stale! Who wants a Christmas pie in May but Jack Horner?

JACK HORNER: I told you I am a good boy! I might tear my new jacket climbing over the wall.

JILL: Peter Piper, you climb over the wall then for the see-saw board. This morning

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers;
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked!

JACK:

If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

JILL: There in his hand! If you could pick a peck of pickled peppers, Peter Piper, you surely can climb over the wall for the board.

PETER PIPER: Well, somebody hold my peck of pickled peppers for me, and somebody else give me a boost.

[*Tom Tinker runs to hold the peppers and Jack is about to give him a boost, when Old Mother Goose, bareheaded, puts her head out of the door, holds out a pail, and calls.*]

OLD MOTHER GOOSE: Jack and Jill!

JACK AND JILL [*Jack leaving Peter Piper and running over to Jill*]: Yes, Old Mother Goose!

OLD MOTHER GOOSE:

Jack and Jill,
Go up the hill
To fetch a pail of water!

I've taken a notion
  This morning to wander
High up in the air—
  Now don't you meander!

I'm anxious to be up
  And away, but first
My gander must needs
  To quench his thirst.

JACK AND JILL [*taking the pail*]: All right, Old Mother Goose!

[*Old Mother Goose withdraws her head and Jack and Jill start up Pippin Hill, swinging the pail between them.*]

THE OTHERS: Wait, Jack and Jill! We'll come, too!

[*All but Humpty Dumpty, Jenny, and Jack Horner set out after Jack and Jill, Three Blind Mice last, and soon catch up with them.*]

HUMPTY DUMPTY:

Old Mother Goose, when
  She wishes to wander,
Will rise through the air
  On a very fine gander.

That's why she wants Jack and Jill to fetch a pail of water, I suppose. He must be watered before she sets out. As if he couldn't drink at a cloud. Old Mother Goose spoils that gander! Ho, hum, but I'm sleepy!

[*He nods and yawns and stretches till he is fast asleep. Meanwhile, Johnny Stout has jumped over the stile, followed more sedately by Little Miss, Pretty Miss. Pussy Cat meows louder. Johnny Stout stops to listen, then he runs over to the well and pulls Pussy Cat out. Little Miss, Pretty Miss gets out her handkerchief and sets about wiping Pussy Cat off. Pussy Cat purrs. By this time the others have reached the top of the hill. Little Miss, Pretty Miss drops Jack a pretty curtsy.*]

JACK [*bowing to her*]:

As I was going up Pippin Hill,—
Pippin Hill was dirty,—
There I met a pretty miss,
And she dropped me a curtsy.

JILL: Whose pussy cat have you there, Little Miss, Pretty Miss, and what has happened to her?

LITTLE MISS, PRETTY MISS [*dropping Jill a curtsy and pulling her bell out of her pocket and ringing it*]: Little Johnny Green's pussy cat!

Ding dong bell,
Puss was in the well!

ALL:

Who put her in?

LITTLE MISS, PRETTY MISS [*pointing to Johnny Green*]:

Little Johnny Green!

ALL:

Who pulled her out?

LITTLE MISS, PRETTY MISS [*pointing to Johnny Stout*]:

Great Johnny Stout!

ALL [*pointing their fingers at Johnny Green, who slinks away around the wall, hanging his head*]:

What a naughty boy was that
To drown poor pussy cat,
Who never did him any harm,
But killed the mice in his father's barn!

ELSIE MARLEY: And what a kind boy is Johnny Stout!

[*Johnny Stout stands pigeon-toed and embarrassed at her praise. Little Miss, Pretty Miss gives a final pat to Pussy Cat's fur.*]

LITTLE MISS, PRETTY MISS: There. Pussy Cat, you are all nice and dry again now!

PUSSY CAT [*curtsying to her*]:

Little miss, pretty miss,
Blessings light upon you!
If I had half-a-crown a day,
I'd spend it all upon you.

LITTLE MISS, PRETTY MISS: Oh, but it was great Johnny Stout that pulled you out of the well, Pussy Cat, I only—

[*Three Blind Mice have come up with the others by now and have halted, sniffling warily. Pussy Cat sniffs, spies Three Blind Mice, and darts for them.*]

THREE BLIND MICE: Squeak! Squeak!

[*They turn and flee, pell-mell, down the hill, Pussy Cat at their heels. All disappear into the house.*]

ALL WITH JACK AND JILL [*turning to look after them*]:

Three blind mice, see how they run!
They all ran after the farmer's wife,
Who cut off their tails with a carving knife,
Did you ever see such fools in your life?
Three blind mice.

JOHNNY STOUT: Oh, but the farmer's wife was afraid of them, and they are afraid of Pussy Cat.

ELSIE MARLEY:

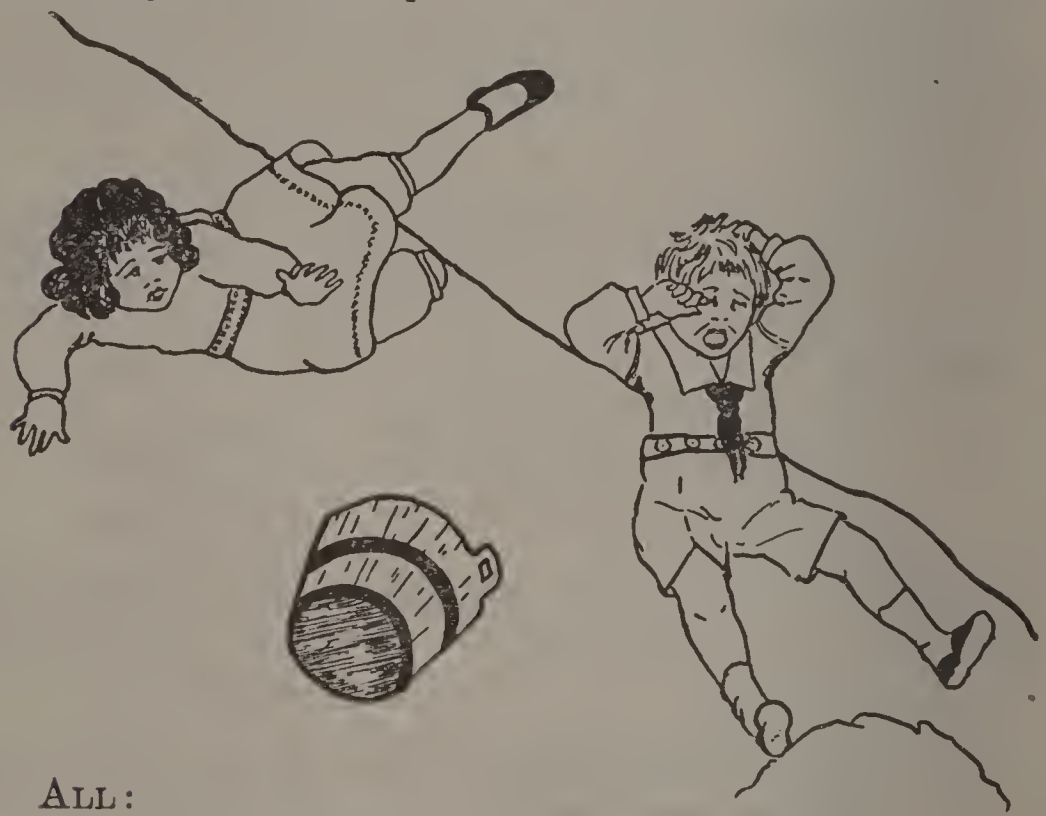
Mice frighten women,
And cats scare mice,
And dogs make cats
Disappear in a trice!

OLD MOTHER GOOSE [*chasing Pussy Cat out of the house with her gander*]: Scat! Scat, there! Your paws are all wet! Shoo! You're tracking my nice, clean floor all up and I haven't time to scrub it again this morning! Shoo!

[*Pussy Cat settles down on the steps and proceeds to wash her face. Old Mother Goose raises her voice to call.*]

Jack and Jill,
Come down that hill
To fetch that pail of water!

[*She goes in. Jack and Jill, startled, turn and run down the hill, forgetting to get the water. Halfway down, Jack stubs his toe on a stone and falls down, bumping his head, Jill tumbling down after him. The pail goes rolling down the hill. All but Johnny Green run after Jack and Jill. Johnny Green goes to sit on the stile, elbows on knees, chin in hands, watching the others.*]



ALL:

Jack fell down!
And broke his crown!
And Jill came tumbling after!

OLD MOTHER GOOSE [*putting her head out again*]: Jack and Jill!

JACK AND JILL: Yes, Old Mother Goose! We're coming!

[*Jack gets up, rubbing his head, and runs limping down the hill, Jill picking herself up and following him. Old Mother Goose comes out on the steps as Jack and Jill reach them. She is smoothing her gander's feathers with a brush.*]

OLD MOTHER GOOSE: What's all this? What's all this?

JACK HORNER:

Jack and Jill
Went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water.

JILL:

Jack fell down
And broke his crown!

JACK:

And Jill came tumbling after!

JILL:

Then up Jack got
And home did trot
As fast as he could caper!

OLD MOTHER GOOSE: Dear, dear! Poor Jacky! Poor Jacky! Go into the kitchen. Old Mother Hubbard's there. She's come over to stay with all you children while I rise through the air on my very fine gander for a spell. I'm too busy brushing him up for the trip. Old Mother Hubbard will doctor you up and put you to bed, Jack.

[*Jack and Jill go into the house. The rest, except Simple Simon and The Crooked Man arrive at the steps. Simple Simon stopped along the way to pick something off a bush. He quickly dropped it, putting his fingers into his mouth and whistling with pain.*]

PETER PIPER: Where's Jack, Old Mother Goose?

OLD MOTHER GOOSE:

He went to bed
To mend his head
In vinegar and brown paper.

[*She is about to go into the house when Simple Simon reaches the steps, sucking his fingers and whistling and dancing.*]

What's the matter with you, Simple Simon?

THE CROOKED MAN:

Simple Simon went to look
If plums grew on a thistle;
He pricked his fingers very much,
Which made poor Simon whistle!

OLD MOTHER GOOSE: Dear, dear, Simple Simon, will you never learn any sense? Well, well, stop dancing and whistling so. Go into the kitchen and Old Mother Hubbard will tie up your finger for you.

[*Simple Simon runs into the house.*]

JILL [*putting her head out of the door*]: Old Mother Goose! Old Mother Goose!

OLD MOTHER GOOSE: What is it, Jill? What is it?

JILL:

Old Mother Hubbard
Went to the cupboard,
To get her poor dog a bone;
But when she came there,
The cupboard was bare,
And so the poor dog had none!

OLD MOTHER GOOSE [*shaking a stern finger at Tom Tinker*]: Tom Tinker, did you give that drumstick out of the cupboard to your dog? I put it there apurpose for Old Mother Hubbard to give her dog when she came over to mind the lot of you till I get back.

TOM TINKER: Yes'm.

OLD MOTHER GOOSE: Then, Tom Tinker, you march yourself right off and find out where your dog has buried it and you bring it straight back for Old Mother Hubbard to give her dog. Don't you know Old Mother Hubbard's dog is company?

[*Old Mother Goose goes into the house, and Tom Tinker starts off to find the bone. As he walks along the steps, he spies Pussy Cat and stops.*]

TOM TINKER [*in Pussy Cat's face*]:

Bow, wow, wow!

PUSSY CAT [*shrinking back, humping up her back, and spreading her fingers like claws*]:

Whose dog art thou?

TOM TINKER:

Little Tom Tinker's dog—
Bow, wow, wow!

[*Tom Tinker thrusts his dog into Pussy Cat's face. Pussy Cat jumps up, scratches at the dog, spits, and then flees down the steps and up Pippin Hill. Tom Tinker runs after her, barking. When nearly at the top of the hill, Pussy Cat sees Johnny Green on the stile and halts, looking fearfully up at him and then back at Tom Tinker. Old Mother Goose puts her head out of the door.*]

OLD MOTHER GOOSE: What's all this rumpus? Tom Tinker, you call your dog off Pussy Cat this minute! Why aren't you looking for that drumstick as I told you? Old Mother Hubbard's talking about going to the baker's to buy her poor dog some bread!

TOM TINKER: Yes'm. Yup! Yup!

[*He comes back down the hill, Pussy Cat following warily. Old Mother Goose withdraws her head. At the barking Humpty Dumpty woke up and has sat yawning and rubbing his eyes till now he tumbles off the wall, tearing his "eggshell" in his fall. He remains sprawled on the ground. All gather around him, even Jenny and Jack Horner.*]

ALL: Old Mother Goose! Old Mother Goose! Come quick! Oh, come quick!

OLD MOTHER GOOSE [*running out of the house, polishing the gander's reins with a cloth*]: Whatever is the matter now? I'll never in this world get myself and my very fine gander ready to rise through the air before night!

JENNY:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall!

[*All the king's Horses and all the king's Men leap over the stile, knocking Johnny Green off, and come cantering down the hill.*]

OLD MOTHER GOOSE [*pointing to them*]:

Ask all the king's Horses and all the king's Men
If they can put Humpty Dumpty together again!

I have my hat to get out and brush yet!

[*She goes into the house. The children beckon to All the king's Horses and all the king's Men.*]

ALL:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;
All ye king's Horses, and all ye king's Men,
Can't ye put Humpty Dumpty together again?

[*All the king's Men ride up to Humpty Dumpty, scattering the group about him with their swords.*]

ALL THE KING'S MEN [*pulling on their reins*]: Whoa! Whoa!

[*All the king's Horses whoa and all the king's Men attempt to stand Humpty Dumpty on his feet, only tearing off pieces of "shell" with their swords. Finally they stop trying, shaking their heads.*]

Though we're king's Horses, and though we're king's Men,
We can't put Humpty Dumpty together again!

[*They "cluck" to their horses and gallop back up the hill, leap over the stile, and are gone.*]

ALL: Old Mother Goose! Old Mother Goose!

OLD MOTHER GOOSE [*coming out, putting her hat on*]: What is it now?

JACK HORNER:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;
All the king's Horses, and all the king's Men
Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again!

[*Mary bursts into tears.*]

OLD MOTHER GOOSE: Well, Humpty Dumpty, let this be a lesson to you to keep down off the wall! You're forever perched up there! Stop crying, Mary! Just because All the king's Horses and all the king's Men couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again doesn't say nobody can! Run into the kitchen, Johnny Stout, and get Old Mother Hubbard to make him a mustard plaster or a poultice or something.

[*She picks up the pail. Johnny Stout goes into the house.*]

Since Jack is in bed mending his head and Jill is reading "Jack and the Beanstalk" to him, I suppose I shall have to go up Pippin Hill myself to fetch a pail of water for my very fine gander!

JILL [*in the house*]: Old Mother Goose! Old Mother Goose!

OLD MOTHER GOOSE [*dropping the pail and hastily mounting her gander*]: I do declare! What can have happened now? If I don't be off, I'll never get! Old Mother Hubbard will be going home next!

JILL [*still in the house*]: Old Mother Goose! Old Mother Goose!

She went to the baker's
To buy him some bread;
But when she came back,

[*Jill puts her head out of the door.*]

The poor dog was dead!

[*Old Mother Goose gallops off up the hill, "clucking" to her gander and shaking the lines over his*

head. She squawks all the way for him. As she flies over the stile, knocking Johnny Green off, she looks back and waves and calls as she disappears.]

OLD MOTHER GOOSE: Mary, don't let your lamb follow you to school while I'm gone! Betty Blue, don't you lose your other holiday shoe! Johnny Green, don't you put Pussy Cat in the well! Peter Piper—

[*All the children wave back, Jack, his head in brown paper, Jill, Simple Simon, his fingers in rags, and Johnny Stout, a mustard plaster in his hand, come outside the door to wave, the Three Blind Mice peeping and waving from behind them*].

CURTAIN

Three-Score Miles and Ten

A picturesque playlet in one scene, for about thirteen children.

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

MICHAEL, a little boy.
LOTTIE, his sister. Both wear sleeping garments.
THE TICKET MAN, a boy in a gold braid-trimmed cap and jacket.
THE GUIDE MAN, a boy in a fantastic scarlet and black uniform and cap.
THE NATIVE MAN, a boy in bright-hued garments—like Bible pictures—and a tray of dates and figs swung around his neck.
THE NATIVE WOMAN, a girl in native costume, a water jar on her head.
THE NATIVE CHILDREN, six or seven boys and girls in native costume.

SETTING

Seagulls, sails, camels, and palms may be cut out of paper and pinned or pasted on wall at back of stage to give a touch of "local color" to the background.

There are two entrances, one to the right, one to the left. Set up in the left entrance is the ticket window. It is high enough to be just above Michael's and Lottie's heads so that they must stand on tiptoe to talk with Ticket Man.

To be especially effective, the stage is brightly lighted at first, then, as the action progresses, gradually dimmed, till, at the end, the only light is the candle in the right entrance.

SCENE

[*Michael and Lottie enter at right, hand in hand, and skip across stage to ticket window. They half sing their lines, as do the other characters, too, to the half-tune of "How many miles to Babylon."*]

MICHAEL AND LOTTIE [*to Ticket Man back of his window*]:

How many miles to Babylon?

TICKET MAN:

Th score miles and ten.

MICHAEL AND LOTTIE:

Can we get there by candle-light?

TICKET MAN:

Yes, and back again.
If your heels are nimble and light,
You may get there by candle-light.

MICHAEL AND LOTTIE:

What is the fare to Babylon?

TICKET MAN:

Three-score cents and ten.

MICHAEL AND LOTTIE [*shoving pennies through ticket window*]:

Have we enough to take us there?

TICKET MAN [*counting pennies*]:

Yes, and back again.
Enough for two berths and some to spare
To spend for trinkets when you get there.

[*Pushes two pennies back.*]

MICHAEL AND LOTTIE:

Who will show us to Babylon?

TICKET MAN:

One of my good men.

MICHAEL AND LOTTIE:

And will he go with us all the way?

TICKET MAN:

Yes, and back again.
Since his heels are nimble and light,
He may get there by candle-light.

[*Lifts a whistle to his lips and blows a shrill blast. Guide Man runs in around ticket window. Salutes Ticket Man.*]

Show these travelers to Babylon,
There and back again;
Point them out the wondrous sights,
Three-score sights and ten.
Pick your heels up nimble and light,
They must return by candle-light.

[*Guide Man salutes again. Takes Michael and Lottie by the hand and off the three start. Their course takes them once around the stage. Their steps must be slow enough to last out the verses, but must have an appearance of hurry.*]

GUIDE MAN:

Come, my pretties, aboard the ship,
Else it will be gone
With nary a one of the three of us
On deck for Babylon.
See the sailors' last-minute haste,
We've nary a moment ourselves to waste!

[*Now their walk is a rolling from side to side, as if on board a ship.*]

LOTTIE [*pointing*]:

Look at the seagulls! See the waves!
And there's a monster whale!

MICHAEL [*pointing*]:

See, where the sky and billows meet,
A silver speck of sail!

LOTTIE:

There, the ship has come within hail,
Wave your handkerchief over the rail.

[*Wave to one of the sails on the wall.*]

MICHAEL [*pointing*]:

See Gibralter's famous rock,
And sunny Sicily!

LOTTIE [*pointing*]:

See the shores of Spartaland!
See the red Red Sea!

MICHAEL [*shading his eyes and peering ahead*]:

Guide Man, what is that far-off mark?

GUIDE MAN:

The shore, I'll be bound, where we disembark!
Come, my pretties, we go ashore
Here for Babylon.
Now to bargain with camelmen,
Else they will be gone.
Up you go on the camel's back,
Clacketty, clacketty, clacketty, clack!

[*Their walk now is clumsy and high-stepping.*]

MICHAEL [*looking and pointing down*]:

See the glittering desert sand,
It makes me blink my eyes!

LOTTIE [*pointing*]:

See how the palms and olives look
Under oriental skies!

GUIDE MAN:

Here you are in Babylontown!

MICHAEL AND LOTTIE:

Hooray! Hooray! Kneel down! Kneel down!

[*Kneel, for camels. Now their walk is natural. They look curiously all around.*]

MICHAEL:

See the walls of Babylon!
See the minaret towers!

LOTTIE:

See the hanging gardens abloom
With red and purple flowers!

MICHAEL:

There's the temple some mighty king
Built years and years ago!

LOTTIE:

There are books of brick and stone
Of wonderful tales, I know!

[*Native Woman enters at right.*]

MICHAEL AND LOTTIE [*when the Native Woman has come up with them*]:

May we have a drink from your jar?

NATIVE WOMAN:

Three-score drinks and ten!

MICHAEL AND LOTTIE [*laughing*]:

But what if we empty your water jar?

NATIVE WOMAN:

I can fill it up again.

[*After they have drunk from her jar, she goes on and out at left. Native Children run in at right and stop before them.*]

LOTTIE:

How many girls in Babylon?

NATIVE GIRLS:

Three-score girls and ten.

MICHAEL:

How many boys in Babylon?

NATIVE BOYS:

Three-score boys and ten.

NATIVE CHILDREN:

Three-score girls and three-score boys
To make a lot of fun and noise.

[*Native Children execute a group dance in center of stage. Michael and Lottie watch them a moment, then leave Guide Man and run and join in the fun. When the dance is ended, Native Children run out*

at left with a wave to Michael and Lottie. Native Man enters at right. Michael and Lottie rejoin Guide Man, and pause when Native Man comes up with them.]

MICHAEL AND LOTTIE:

How are you selling figs and dates,
  Mister Native Man?
We would buy our mother some,
  And father, if we can.

NATIVE MAN:

Figs and dates are cheap today,
  Three-score cents and ten.

[*Michael and Lottie put their remaining pennies on his tray, and he gives each of them a handful of dates and figs.*]

Thanks, brave sir, and thanks, fair miss,
  Come and buy again.

[*Native Man goes on and out at left.*]

GUIDE MAN:

Come, my pretties, we must be on;
  Three-score miles and ten
We've got to go before we see
  Our native land again.
Our heels must nimble be and light,
If we get there by candle-light.

MICHAEL AND LOTTIE [*suiting their steps to their words*]:

Clacketty, clacketty, clacketty, clack,
  On the camels again;
Up-and-down, up-and-down, up-and-down, up,
  On the sea again.

[*Wave behind them.*]

Good-by, fair sights of Babylon
  Beneath the eastern sky,
And camels, waves, and sailormen,
  Good-by, good-by, good-by.

[*Just as they reach ticket window again, a candle is lighted in the right entrance.*]

GUIDE MAN:

There, my pretties, you're safely back
Back by candle-light;
Now I must be off, good-night!

[*Skips out at left, saluting.*]

MICHAEL AND LOTTIE [*waving after him*]:

Many thanks! Good-night!

[*Turn and skip, but on heavy feet, toward right entrance, hand in hand, yawning, heads nodding sleepily.*]

How many miles to Babylon?
Three-score miles and ten.
Some other night we'll have to go
To Babylon again.
Now our heels are heavy as lead,
Three-score puffs, and into bed!

[*Blow candle out and run out.*]

CURTAIN

Cock Robin

A playlet in one scene. May be given out-of-doors if desired. For eight boys and seven girls.

CHARACTERS

The boys are:

Cock Robin
James Crow
Ezra Sparrow
Heber Owl
Yellow Hammer
Levi Rook
Thomas Kite
Silas Bull

The girls are:

Lizzie Fly
Delia Fish
Betsy Beetle
Becky Lark
Randy Linnet
Esther Dove
Sarah Thrush

COSTUMES

Costumes may characterize elaborately the various birds, insects, etc., or they may be simply fins, horns, tufts of feathers for tails, etc.

SETTING

The stage is leafy and green to represent an open place in the wood. Entrance at right.

SCENE

[*Cock Robin lies under a bush somewhat back of center stage, an arrow seemingly piercing his heart. James Crow enters, flapping his wings. James Crow takes upon himself the mastership of ceremonies and acts in an important, drum-majorlike manner.*]

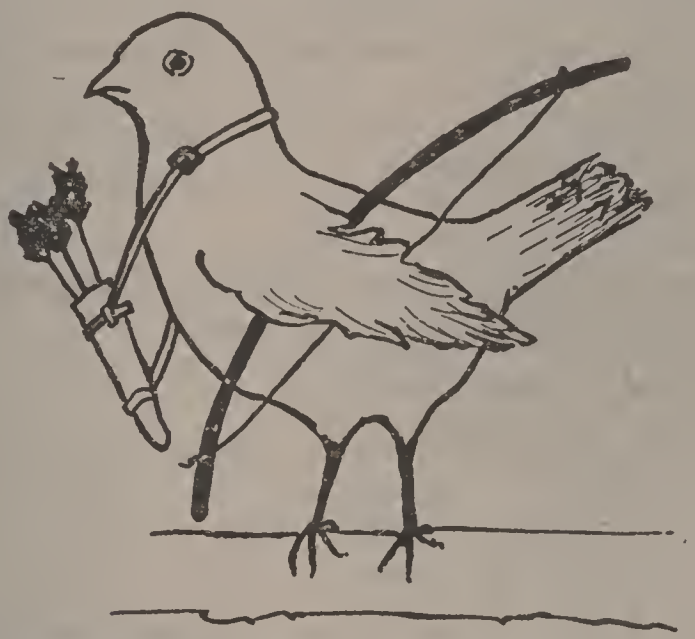
JAMES CROW:

Caw! Caw!

[*Spying Cock Robin, he exclaims.*]

Who killed Cock Robin?

[*Ezra Sparrow enters chirping. He has his bow and a quiver of arrows is slung at his waist.*]



EZRA SPARROW:

I, Ezra Sparrow,
With my bow and arrow,
I killed Cock Robin.

[*Crosses to left of stage, shooting an arrow from his bow.*]

And this is how
As I perched on a bough.

JAMES CROW:

Caw! Caw!
Who saw him die?

[*Lizzie Fly enters, buzzing.*]

LIZZIE FLY:

I, Lizzie Fly,
With my little eye,
And I saw him die.

[*Crosses to left, holding ringed thumb and forefinger before one eye as she would a monocle.*]

With my good right eye,
And I saw him die.

JAMES CROW:

Caw! Caw!
Who caught his blood?

[*Delia Fish enters, carrying a large sea shell.*]

DELIA FISH:

I, Delia Fish,
With my little dish,
And I caught his blood.

[*Crosses to left, holding shell carefully in front of her as if afraid of spilling it over.*]

In my pretty bowl
From my deep-sea hole.

JAMES CROW:

Caw! Caw!
Who made his shroud?

[*Betsey Beetle enters, the shroud over her arm, thimble on her finger, threaded needle in hand.*]

BETSY BEETLE:

I, Betsy Beetle,
With my little needle,
And I made his shroud.

[*Crosses to left, taking a last stitch in shroud and biting off her thread.*]

From gussets to neckband
I made it by hand.

JAMES CROW:

Caw! Caw!
Who made his coffin?

[*Yellow Hammer enters in cabinet maker's cap and apron, carrying a hammer and a little wooden box.*]

YELLOW HAMMER:

Rap-a-tap-tap!
I, Yellow Hammer,
With sawdust and clamor,
And I made his coffin.

[*Crosses to left, hammering on the box.*]

With here a nail and there a brad,
The finest coffin to be had.

JAMES CROW:

Caw! Caw!
Who shall dig his grave?

[*Heber Owl enters, in overalls, with a spade.*]

HEBER OWL:

Hoo-oo? Hoo-oo?
I, Heber Owl,
With my spade and trow'l,
And I'll dig his grave.

[*Crosses to left, going through motions of spading.*]

With my trow'l and spade,
And 'twill be well-made.

JAMES CROW:

Caw! Caw!
Who'll be the parson?

[*Levi Rook enters, cawing like a rook, a book under his wing.*]

LEVI ROOK:

I, Levi Rook,
With my little book,
And I'll be the parson.

[*Crosses to left, opening his book and holding it up in one hand, his other uplifted.*]

JAMES CROW:

Caw! Caw!
Who'll be the clerk?

[*Becky Lark enters, a ledger under her wing, a quill in her fingers, trilling as much like a lark as possible. The lark, linnet, and thrush are song birds. Birdlike trills will do very well for their songs.*]

BECKY LARK:

I, Becky Lark,
If it's not in the dark,
And I'll be the clerk.

[*Crosses to left, opening ledger and getting ready to make an entry with many old-time flourishes.*]

Could I see to write
If 'twere in the night?

JAMES CROW:

Caw! Caw!
Who'll carry him to the grave?

[*Thomas Kite enters, uttering harsh kite sounds.*]

THOMAS KITE:

I, Thomas Kite,
If 'tis not in the night,
And I'll carry him to the grave.

[*Solemnly crosses to left, bending over as if bearing Cock Robin's weight upon his back.*]

Too poor is my sight
To walk forth at night.

JAMES CROW:

Caw! Caw!
Who'll carry the link?

[*Randy Linnet enters, carrying a slim vase in her hand, a candle in the vase. The top of the candle is even with the rim of the vase. She trills as much like a linnet as possible.*]

RANDY LINNET:

I, Randy Linnet,
I'll fetch it in a minute,
And I'll carry the link.

[*Strikes a match and lights candle, then crosses to left, holding link high in front of her.*]

This is the link
With fire in it.

JAMES CROW:

Caw! Caw!
Who'll be the chief mourner?

[*Esther Dove enters, uttering the plaintive notes of the dove.*]

ESTHER DOVE:

I, Esther Dove,
I mourn for my love,
And I'll be the chief mourner.

[*Crosses to left, weeping and wiping her eyes on her handkerchief, and repeating her mournful cries.*]

JAMES CROW:

Caw! Caw!
Who'll sing a psalm?

[*Sarah Thrush enters, a hymn book under her wing, trilling as nearly as possible the song of the thrush.*]

SARAH THRUSH:

I, Sarah Thrush,
As I sit in a bush,
And I'll sing a psalm.

[*Opens book and crosses to left, singing again.*]

JAMES CROW:

Caw! Caw!
And who'll toll the bell?

[*Silas Bull enters, a cowbell around his neck with a rope to pull it by.*]

SILAS BULL:

Moo-oo-oo!
I, Silas Bull,
Because I can pull,
And so, Cock Robin, farewell.

[*Crosses to left, pulling bell rope so that bell tolls.*]

JAMES CROW [*wiping his eyes on his handkerchief*]:

And so, Cock Robin, farewell.

[*All wipe their eyes on their handkerchiefs, each uttering his particular caw, chirp, etc., in concert. Cock Robin stirs, stretches, sits up, rubbing his eyes*

and yawning. Seeing the gathering of his neighbors, he jumps up, the arrow falling to the ground unnoticed.]

COCK ROBIN:

What woke Cock Robin?
His neighbors, gathered,
Four-footed and feathered,
To surprise Cock Robin!
Cheer-o! Cheer-o! Cheer-o!

JAMES CROW [*open-mouthed, scratching his head*]: Caw! Caw!

[*Struggling to collect his wits, he hops away.*]

COCK ROBIN [*invitingly*]:

Who'll dance with Cock Robin
A woodland quadrille?
Cheer-o! Who will?
Who'll dance with Cock Robin?

ESTHER DOVE [*curtsying to Cock Robin*]:

I'll dance with Cock Robin
A woodland quadrille,
(Dove notes). I will,
And I'll dance with Cock Robin.

[*James Crow, his manner recovered, leads alone a pretty, woodland dance, all tossing aside into the bushes whatever they carry. Since most of the characters are birds, it should be chiefly a hopping, fluttering dance and with birdlike turnings of the head. Part of the time the dancers dance singly, part of the time in two's. Now and again throughout the dance Lizzie Fly is buzzing, or Ezra Sparrow is chirping, or Heber Owl is hooting, etc. Finally they hop in a ring around Cock Robin.*]

JAMES CROW:

Caw! Caw!
Who loves Cock Robin?

[*A volley of caws, chirps, etc. Nodding vigorously.*]

We all love Cock Robin!

CURTAIN

The Old Woman and Her Pig

A clever play, in two scenes. For fourteen children.

CHARACTERS

Girls	The Old Woman,	Rope,
	Stick,	Cat,
	Fire,	Cow.
	Water,	
Boys	Piggy,	Butcher,
	Dog,	Rat,
	Ox,	Haymakers, two.

COSTUMES

The Old Woman is old-fashioned. In the first scene she wears an everyday dress, gingham apron, and dustcap. In the second she has on her best dress, shawl, mitts, and bonnet.

Piggy has ears on top of his head and a curly tail behind.

Cat, Cow, Dog, Ox, and Rat have the proper ears and tails.

Stick carries a gad.

Fire is dressed in red and carries a lighted candle.

Water has a large pail.

Butcher wears a white apron and brandishes a butcher knife.

Rope carries a short length of stout rope with frayed end.

Haymakers have on overalls and big straw hats. Red handkerchiefs hang out of their pockets. They carry pitchforks.

SCENE I

[*With broom and dustpan, the Old Woman is sweeping her kitchen. There are real ravelings and rolls of dust on the floor.*]

OLD WOMAN [*sneezing*]: Mercy me, what a dust I'm raising! What's that? [*Stoops and picks up battered piece of money out of her little heap of dust. Rubs it on her apron.*] I want to know! If it ain't a crooked sixpence! Now how did that get there I wonder. Well, well, what shall I do with this little sixpence? I know! I will go to market and buy a little pig. [*With quick movements sweeps heap of dust onto dustpan and goes out with it.*]

SCENE II

[*Across the right side of stage is a hedge with a stile over it. The hedge is made of plants or leafy branches of trees. The Old Woman enters at left, shooing Piggy before her with her skirts. When they reach the stile, Piggy will not go over it.*]

OLD WOMAN [*coaxingly*]:

Piggy, nice Piggy,
  Get over the stile,
And then it's only
  A half a mile,

To a pail of middlings
  And sour milk,
And a bed of straw
  As soft as silk.

PIGGY [*running to one side along hedge*]: Squee! Squee!

OLD WOMAN [*worriedly shooing him back*]:

Mercy me, if here
Ain't a plight!
Piggy, Piggy,
I sha'n't get home tonight!

PIGGY [*running to other side along hedge*]: Squee! Squee!

[*Old Woman, looking around helplessly, spies Dog, who has entered at left and come up near stile.*]

OLD WOMAN:

Dog, Dog, bite Pig;
Piggy won't get over the stile;
And I sha'n't get home tonight.

DOG [*shaking his head*]: Bow-wow! Bow-wow!

[*Old Woman goes on a step or two to Stick, who has entered at left and come up behind Dog. Fire, Water, etc., enter in turn and come up behind Stick, Fire, etc., just as Old Woman turns from each and proceeds a step or two on her way across the stage to left. By the time they are all in, they should stretch in a line across stage from stile to left entrance, facing stile. If the stage is not broad enough the line*

may curve. Meanwhile, Piggy lies down before stile.]

OLD WOMAN [*to Stick*]:

Stick, Stick, beat Dog;
Dog won't bite Pig;
Piggy won't get over the stile;
And I sha'n't get home tonight.

[*Stick shakes her head and raps twice on the floor with her gad.*]

[*To Fire*]:

Fire, Fire, burn Stick;
Stick won't beat Dog;
Dog won't bite Pig;
Piggy won't get over the stile;
And I sha'n't get home tonight.

[*Fire shakes her head and her candle.*]

[*To Water*]:

Water, Water, quench Fire;
Fire won't burn Stick;
Stick won't beat Dog;
Dog won't bite Pig;
Piggy won't get over the stile;
And I sha'n't get home tonight.

[*Water shakes her head and her pail.*]

[*To Ox*]:

Ox, Ox, drink Water;
Water won't quench Fire;
Fire won't burn Stick;
Stick won't beat Dog;
Dog won't bite Pig;
Piggy won't get over the stile;
And I sha'n't get home tonight.

OX [*shaking lowered head*]: Moo! Moo!

OLD WOMAN [*to Butcher*]:

Butcher, Butcher, kill Ox;
Ox won't drink Water;
Water won't quench Fire;
Fire won't burn Stick;
Stick won't beat Dog;
Dog won't bite Pig;
Piggy won't get over the stile;
And I sha'n't get home tonight.

BUTCHER [*shaking his head*]: No! No!

[*Old Woman dodges his waving knife.*]

OLD WOMAN [*to Rope*]:

Rope, Rope, hang Butcher;
Butcher won't kill Ox;
Ox won't drink Water;
Water won't quench Fire;
Fire won't burn Stick;
Stick won't beat Dog;
Dog won't bite Pig;
Piggy won't get over the stile;
And I sha'n't get home tonight.

[*Rope shakes her head and thrashes floor twice with end of rope.*]

[*To Rat*]:

Rat, Rat, gnaw Rope;
Rope won't hang Butcher;
Butcher won't kill Ox;
Ox won't drink Water;
Water won't quench Fire;
Fire won't burn Stick;
Stick won't beat Dog;
Dog won't bite Pig;
Piggy won't get over the stile;
And I sha'n't get home tonight.

RAT [*shaking his head*]: Squeak! Squeak!

OLD WOMAN [*to Cat*]:

Cat, Cat, kill Rat;
Rat won't gnaw Rope;
Rope won't hang Butcher;
Butcher won't kill Ox;
Ox won't drink Water;
Water won't quench Fire;
Fire won't burn Stick;
Stick won't beat Dog;
Dog won't bite Pig;
Piggy won't get over the stile;
And I sha'n't get home tonight.

CAT [*pointing over her shoulder*]: If you will go to yonder Cow, and fetch me a saucer of milk, I will kill the Rat. Mee-ow! Mee-ow!

OLD WOMAN [*to Cow*]:

Cow, Cow, give me a saucer of milk;
Cat won't kill Rat;
Rat won't gnaw Rope;
Rope won't hang Butcher;
Butcher won't kill Ox;
Ox won't drink Water;
Water won't quench Fire;
Fire won't burn Stick;
Stick won't beat Dog;
Dog won't bite Pig;
Piggy won't get over the stile;
And I sha'n't get home tonight.

COW [*pointing over her shoulder*]: If you will go to yonder Haymakers, and fetch me a wisp of hay, I'll give you the milk. Moo! Moo!

OLD WOMAN [*to Haymakers*]:

Haymakers, give me a wisp of hay;
Cow won't give me milk;
Cat won't kill Rat;
Rat won't gnaw Rope;
Rope won't hang Butcher;
Butcher won't kill Ox;
Ox won't drink Water;
Water won't quench Fire;
Fire won't burn Stick;
Stick won't beat Dog;
Dog won't bite Pig;
Piggy won't get over the stile;
And I sha'n't get home tonight.

HAYMAKERS [*pointing to front, left corner of stage, where some stones are scattered, and holding out a tin bucket*]: If you will go to yonder stream, and fetch us a bucket of water, we'll give you the hay.

[*Old Woman takes bucket and goes to the stream. There she turns up the front of her skirt and kneels down stiffly. She looks into bucket.*]

OLD WOMAN:

Mercy me!
As I do live,
This bucket's nothing
But a sieve!

[*She puts pebbles in it and then pretends to scoop it up full of water out of the stream. She returns to Haymakers. One Haymaker takes the bucket and drinks thirstily. The other gives her the wisp of hay.*]

HAYMAKER:

It's thirsty we get
  This summer day;
Thanks to you, ma'am,
  And here's your hay.

OLD WOMAN: Thank ye! Thank ye! I'm much obliged!

[*She returns to the Cow. Cow eats wisp of hay hungrily.*]

COW:

Moo!
  Moo!
And here's the saucer
  Of milk for you.

[*Cow pulls a saucer out of her pocket and gives it carefully to the Old Woman.*]

OLD WOMAN: Thank ye! Thank ye! I'm much obliged!

[*She carries saucer of milk carefully to Cat. Cat laps the milk up greedily.*]

CAT [*licking her chops*]:

Mee-ow!
  Mee-ow!
Watch me kill
  That fat Rat now!

[*She pounces upon Rat.*]

RAT: Squeak! Squeak!

[*Rat gnaws at rope. Rope twists her rope about Butcher's neck.*]

BUTCHER: Ouch! Ouch!

[*Butcher sticks his knife into Ox.*]

OX: Moo! Moo!

[*Ox drinks out of pail. Water turns pail upside-down over candle. Fire touches candle to Stick. Stick beats Dog with her gad.*]

DOG: Bow-wow! Bow-wow!

[*Dog bites Piggy.*]

PIGGY [*jumping up in fright*]: Squee! Squee!

[*He jumps over the stile in great haste. The Old Woman follows, her skirts held high. She shoos Piggy out at right.*]

OLD WOMAN: Thanks a mercy, I'll get home to-night after all!

CURTAIN

Curly Locks

A charming playlet in one scene. For nine children, five boys and four girls.

CHARACTERS

CURLY LOCKS,
BOBBY SHAFTOE,
TWO BOYS FROM JAPAN,
TWO GIRLS FROM BELGIUM,
A LAD FROM THE FARM,
A BLACK BOY FROM THE PLANTATION, AND
A MAID FROM THE DAIRY.

COSTUMES

Curly Locks has on a pink apron, wet down the front, and her sleeves are rolled up. She has thick, long curls, tied with a pink ribbon.

Bobby Shaftoe is in a natty sailor suit and cap and has silver buckles at his knees. The buckles may be made of cardboard and covered with silver paper.

The two boys from Japan are in gorgeous native costume, the one in yellow figured with purple designs, the other in pale green with orange designs. One of them has a cushion of figured silk, many-colored tassels at the corners.

The two girls from Belgium are in peasant costume —black girdles laced over white blouses and full skirts, the one scarlet, the other royal blue. They have on peasant caps and wooden shoes. The one has a napkin with a threaded needle in the hem, the other has a square of lace.

The lad from the farm has on overalls and a big straw hat. He has a little basket fashioned from green leaves and filled with strawberries. The strawberries may be made of red tissue paper and cotton

batting with bits of green for the hulls. Among them is a candy strawberry.

The black boy from the plantation is a grinning little pickaninny with very white teeth in his blacked face. His black hair is mussed up to make it look wooly. His blacked feet are bare. He is dressed in an odd assortment of bright-hued garments. In his hands are a stalk of sugar cane and a little glass bowl of sugar. The stalk of cane may be artificial.

The maid from the dairy has a ruffled blue apron tied about her waist and a ruffled blue sunbonnet on her head. She has a shining milkpail over her arm and a little glass pitcher of cream in her hand.

SETTING

The stage is a kitchen with a door to the left and another to the right. In the center is a table piled with dishes and pots and pans. In their midst is a dishpan of soapy water. Two low stools are on the floor near the table, a battered pail on one of them. There may be other kitchen furniture and utensils to complete the room if desired.

SCENE

[*Curly Locks is dreamily washing the dishes.*]

CURLY LOCKS:

Bobby Shaftoe's gone to sea,
With silver buckles at his knee,
When he comes back, he'll marry me,
Pretty Bobby Shaftoe.

[*Children just outside the right entrance set up a lusty and continued squealing for the swine. Curly Locks' dreams vanish and she sings cheerfully to the pigs.*]

Curly Locks will leave her pan,
She will bring the swine their bran;
Just as quickly as she can,
Curly Locks is coming.

[*She drops her dishcloth into the water, shakes the suds from her hands, picks up the pail off the stool, and goes out at right. The squealing changes to contented grunting.*]

[*A knock is heard on the door to the left, then another. Then Bobby Shaftoe enters, glancing around, followed by the two boys from Japan, after them the two girls from Belgium, after them the lad from the farm, after him the black boy from the plantation, and last the maid from the dairy. Curly Locks returns as soon as they are all in, setting her pail down by the door as she comes in.*]

BOBBY SHAFTOE:

Curly Locks, Curly Locks, where hast thou been?
When I knocked at thy door, thou wast not within,
To bid me to enter and welcome me
After all these years I have been at sea.

CURLY LOCKS [*joyously*]:

To feed her swine had Curly Locks
Left her pan of pots and crocks,
There she never heard thy knocks—
Welcome, Bobby Shaftoe!

[*Bobby Shaftoe kisses her hand, then he waves the two boys from Japan forward. The one places the cushion on one of the stools.*]

BOBBY SHAFTOE:

A cushion of silk from Tokyotown,
Filled with the softest of Japanese down,
Painted with scenes of the Orient,
Dusted with spicy, far-East scent.

[*Gallantly he seats Curly Locks upon the cushion. Then he waves the two girls from Belgium forward. The one lays the napkin in Curly Locks' lap, the other arranges the square of lace on the other stool.*]

A square of linen from Brusselsland,
Softly sheer and woven by hand;
A bit of a cobweb, drawn and stitched
By fingers that were, I am sure, bewitched.

[*Curly Locks takes a stitch or two in the napkin. Bobby Shaftoe waves the lad from the farm, the black boy from the plantation, and the maid from the dairy forward. The lad places his basket of strawberries on the square of lace, the black boy sets his bowl of sugar beside it, and the maid sets her pitcher of cream beside it.*]

Strawberries fresh from the farm to eat,
Red as your lips and big and sweet;
Sugar straight from the sunny South;
And cream from the dairy to melt in your mouth.

[*Curly Locks daintily picks up the candy strawberry and eats it. Bobby Shaftoe drops to one knee at her feet. The boys from Japan, etc., are in a half circle back of Curly Locks' stool.*]

Curly Locks, Curly Locks, wilt thou be mine?
Thou shalt not wash the dishes, nor yet feed the swine;
But sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam,
And feast upon strawberries, sugar and cream!

CURLY LOCKS:

"When I come back, I'll marry thee,"
Has been my fondest memory—
Now, you are back, I'll marry thee,
Pretty Bobby Shaftoe.

CURTAIN

Three Little Kittens

A cunning little play in three scenes. For three boys and two girls.

CHARACTERS

MOTHER CAT,
THREE LITTLE KITTENS—two boys and a girl,
TOM TINKER'S DOG—a boy.

TIME

A cold day late in the autumn.

COSTUMES

MOTHER CAT—Cat ears standing up through little white cap, blue-checked apron tied about waist, white kerchief, long wired tail showing below dress behind, spectacles.
THREE LITTLE KITTENS—Cat ears and tails, knitted mufflers, overshoes.
TOM TINKER'S DOG—Terrier ears and tail.

All may be much more elaborately dressed up as cats and dog if desired.

ENTRANCES

Two, one on either side.

SCENE I

[*Kitchen. Mother Cat, facing front, is rolling out pie crust at a table. It is real pie crust. Flour sifter, measuring cup, pie tins, spoons and a pumpkin are on the table besides the baking board and the rolling pin she is using. Enter at right Three Little Kittens, prancing. They hold their "paws" in a drooping*

position in front of them like cats. Mother Cat turns to look at them over her spectacles.]

MOTHER CAT [*severely*]: Take off your overshoes! Where are your mittens?

THREE LITTLE KITTENS [*losing their jauntiness of manner*]:

Oh, mother dear,
We very much fear
That we have lost our mittens!

MOTHER CAT:

Lost your mittens!
You naughty kittens!
Then you shall have no pie!

THREE LITTLE KITTENS [*lugubriously wiping their eyes*]:

Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow,
And we can have no pie!
Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow!

MOTHER CAT:

You heedless kittens,
Go find your mittens,
Immediately! Step spry!

THREE LITTLE KITTENS [*going out at right entrance, crying*]:

Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow,
And we can have no pie!
Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow!

MOTHER CAT [*to herself*]: The second pair of new mittens those naughty kittens have lost already and it isn't Thanksgiving yet!

SCENE II

[*Forest. Underbrush background. Tom Tinker's Dog is having a big time in center of stage with three pairs of red mittens, each pair fastened to a long cord. Enter Three Little Kittens at right.*]

TOM TINKER'S DOG [*stopping to look at them*]:

Bow, wow, wow!

THREE LITTLE KITTENS:

Whose dog art thou?

TOM TINKER'S DOG:

Little Tom Tinker's Dog,
Bow, wow, wow!

THREE LITTLE KITTENS [*spitting at Tom Tinker's Dog*]:

Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow!
This morn you made
Us run, afraid,
And drop our new red mittens!
Now back we've come
To chase you home,
Three valiant little kittens!

Let go! Let go!
Or we will know
The foolish reason why;
No dog's bow-wow
Can scare us now,
We want our piece of pie!

Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow,
We want our piece of pie!
Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow!

[*Scratch and spit at Tom Tinker's Dog and chase him out at left entrance. He disentangles himself from mittens as he flees.*]

TOM TINKER'S DOG:

Yip! Yip!

THREE LITTLE KITTENS [*waving derisive paws after him*]:

Mee-ow, mee-ow, good-by!

[*Return across stage, dancing, gathering up their mittens, and putting them on.*]

Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow!

SCENE III

[*Kitchen. Mother Cat, with a towel, is setting pumpkin pie on table—seemingly bringing it from oven. It is a real pie. Enter at right Three Little Kittens, dancing happily.*]

THREE LITTLE KITTENS [*holding up paws*]:

Oh, mother dear,
See here! See here!
We have found our mittens!

MOTHER CAT [*looking up at them over her spectacles*]:

Found your mittens!
You darling kittens!
Then you shall have some pie!

THREE LITTLE KITTENS [*hopping about delightedly*]:

Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow,
Now we can have some pie!
Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow!

[*Mother Cat cuts large wedges out of pie and gives them to Kittens, who then execute a little set dance, waving their pieces of pie above their heads.*]

Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow,
Now we can have some pie!
Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow!

CURTAIN

Over the Hills and Far Away

A lively little play in one scene. For about eighteen children.

CHARACTERS

TOM, TOM, the piper's son,
A group of about six boys and girls, who are ROSS, VAL, TUNIS, HILDA, ZILLAH, and SALLY,
A group of about four pigs, boys and girls,
DOLLY, the milkmaid,
DOLLY'S COW, a girl,
DAME TROT,
THE PEDDLER,
THE PEDDLER'S ASS, a boy,
THE MISERMAN,
THE APPLEWOMAN.

COSTUMES

Tom, Tom is gayly clad in an odd assortment of bright-hued garments, hat, shirt, vest, trousers, stockings all of different colors. His hat is on the back of his head. His hair is ruffled. He has a pipe or a flute or a whistle.

The boys and girls are barefooted and bareheaded. The boys have on overalls, the girls pinafores. The girls have a bit of their front hair pinned into a little knot on top of their heads with one hairpin.

The pigs have ears on top of their heads and curly tails behind.

Dolly wears a blue dress, a checked apron is tied about her waist, and she carries a shining milk pail.

Dolly's Cow has ears, horns, and tail and a cowbell about her neck.

Dame Trot is comically old-fashioned. She has on a cape, bonnet tied under her chin, lace mitts, and bustle. Over her arm she carries an old-fashioned basket of eggs. The eggs are chipped at the ends, the contents blown out, and a little sand substituted to make them heavy enough to break with a realistic crash when they fall on the floor.

The Peddler is picturesquely ragged.

The Peddler's Ass has ears and tail. Pots and pans are hung about his neck and waist.

The Miserman is old and thin and bent, his face is lined, and he is shabbily dressed.

The Applewoman is fat and rosy-cheeked, but is poorly clothed. She has a ragged shawl pinned over her head and a patched apron is tied about her waist. In her two hands she carries a tray of polished red and yellow apples.

ENTRANCES

There are four, if possible, two to the left and two to the right. However, two entrances, one to the left and one to the right, can be made to do if necessary.

SCENE

[*Tom, Tom is sitting on a stone and lolling against the back wall of the stage, playing softly on his pipe or whistle. Any lively tune or even no tune at all will do very well for his "Over the hills and far away." He may even whistle with his lips if he can do that better. The boys and girls enter at right.*]

SALLY [*ahead, pointing*]: There's Tom, Tom, the piper's son!

ZILLAH [*holding up her finger*]: Listen! [*All listen a moment.*]

ALL OF THEM:

Tom, Tom, the piper's son,
He learned to play when he was young;
But all the tunes that he can play
Is "Over the hills and far away,"
Over the hills and a great way off,
And the wind will blow my topknot off!

[*Tom, Tom lazily gets up off his stone and makes for the left entrance, playing louder and faster. At "the wind will blow my topknot off," boys and girls clap one hand up to their topknots and go whirling and dancing after Tom, Tom, single file.*]

Now, Tom with his pipe makes such a noise,
That he pleases both us girls and boys,
And we stop to hear him play
"Over the hills and far away."

[*Tom, Tom goes out at nearer left entrance, followed by the dancing boys and girls. He can be heard playing behind the scenes till he appears at farther left entrance, still followed by the dancing boys and girls. Every once in a while throughout*

the play some boy or girl claps his hand to his head to keep his topknot from blowing off. Tom, Tom starts to cross to right. Pigs enter at right, on all fours, heads down, as if rooting.]

TUNIS [*pointing*]: There are Farmer Higgins' pigs down the road! They must have got out of the field.

[*Tom, Tom plays louder and faster. Pigs stop, look up and listen a moment, then they get up on their "hind legs" and dance gayly about. The faster and faster Tom, Tom plays, the more dizzily they whirl and dance.*]

BOYS AND GIRLS:

Tom with his pipe does play with such skill
That those who hear him can never keep still;
Whenever they hear him they begin for to dance—
Even pigs on their hind legs will after him prance.

[*Tom, Tom stops at last, out of breath. The pigs stop, breathless, too. Then Tom, Tom continues on his way, followed by the dancing boys and girls. When the boys and girls have passed them, the pigs follow, dancing. All go out at nearer right entrance. As before, Tom, Tom plays a moment, softly, behind the scenes and then comes in at farther right entrance. The line back and forth across the stage is always the same, first Tom, Tom, sauntering idly along, next the boys and girls, dancing and whirling, behind them the pigs, dancing and whirling, each new character as he appears taking his place at the end of the dancing procession. If the stage is large enough, they dance single file; if not, they dance grouped. Tom, Tom always plays softly, the moment they remain behind the scenes. Dolly, followed by her Cow, chewing her cud, enters at left as Tom, Tom and his followers come in at right.*]

ROSS [*pointing*]: Tom, Tom, there's Dolly! She's been milking her Cow.

[*Tom, Tom plays louder and faster. Dolly and her Cow stop and look up. Then they begin to dance the "Cheshire round." Faster and faster Tom, Tom plays, and faster and faster Dolly and her Cow dance around and around. Dolly drops her pail and she and her Cow kick it about in their mad dancing.*]

BOYS AND GIRLS:

As Dolly is milking her Cow today,
Tom takes out his pipe and begins for to play;
So Doll and her Cow dance "the Cheshire round,"
Till the pail is broke and the milk runs on the ground.

[*When Tom, Tom has to stop for breath, Dolly and her Cow stop dancing, breathless. Dolly sees her dented pail and the milk on the ground—there should be a little water in the pail to run out—and wrings her hands in dismay. The Cow calmly goes on chewing her cud.*]

DOLLY: My new milk pail! And my milk! However am I going to buy me a setting of Buff Leghorns now to put under Biddy to hatch out twelve chicks to raise to sell in the fall to buy me a dress to get married in? [*Catching sight of Tom, Tom, she wails.*]

Tom, Tom, why did you play
"Over the hills and far away?"
They played that tune at the dance when Jim
O'Hara asked me to marry him!

TOM, TOM: Ha, ha, ha!

[*Tom, Tom commences playing again. Dolly and her Cow begin dancing merrily again, Dolly snapping her fingers gayly at the spilled milk. When the pigs have passed them, Dolly and her Cow follow. All go out at nearer left entrance and come in a moment later at farther left. Dame Trot enters at right, holding up her skirts with one hand, her basket of eggs over one arm and an umbrella under her other arm.*]

ZILLAH [*pointing*]: Tom, Tom, there is Dame Trot going to market!

[*Tom, Tom plays louder and faster. Dame Trot stops, looks up, and then begins to dance. As Tom, Tom plays faster and faster, faster and faster she whirls and dances, waving her basket of eggs and her umbrella. The eggs fall out on the ground, one or two at a time, and the shells are crushed under her flying heels.*]

BOYS AND GIRLS:

Tom meets old Dame Trot with a basket of eggs,
He uses his pipe and she uses her legs;
She dances about till the eggs are all broke,
She begins for to fret, but he laughs at the joke.

[*Tom, Tom stops out of breath. Dame Trot stops dancing, breathless, too. She adjusts her bonnet, pulls her cape straight, and lifts her hands, horrified at the sight of the eggs on the ground.*]

DAME TROT: Goodness sakes alive! My basket of eggs! My basket of eggs I was taking to market! What shall I do? Whatever shall I do? [*Catching sight of Tom, Tom, she shakes her umbrella at him.*]

Tom, Tom, you witless fool,
Why ain't you at your books in school?
Instead of playin' that melody
They played when the beaux was courtin' me?

[*She tosses her head coquettishly and flirts her skirts.*]

TOM, TOM: Ha, ha, ha!

[*Dame Trot takes a menacing step in his direction, but he begins playing again and she forgets her eggs and falls to dancing once more. When Dolly and her Cow have passed her, Dame Trot follows, dancing. All go out at nearer right entrance and enter a moment later at farther right. The Peddler, driving his Ass and beating him with a switch, enters at left. The Ass walks dejectedly, head down.*]

PEDDLER: Giddap, there! D'you want to be all day and all night makin' Sunflowerville?

VAL [*pointing*]: There's the Peddler coming down the road, Tom, Tom!

HILDA: The mean fellow is beating his poor tired Ass loaded down with pots and pans!

[*Tom, Tom plays faster and louder. The Peddler and his Ass stop and look up. Then they begin to dance, the Peddler waving his switch. The pots and pans fall off the Ass and rattle around under their feet as they spin and whirl faster and faster as Tom, Tom plays faster and faster.*]

BOYS AND GIRLS:

Tom sees a cross fellow is beating an Ass,
Heavy-laden with pots, pans, dishes, and glass;
He takes out his pipe and plays them a tune,
And the jackass's load is lightened full soon!

[*Tom, Tom at last stops for breath. The Peddler and his Ass stop, too, out of breath. Stupified, the Peddler looks at the litter of his notions on the ground.*]

PEDDLER: My pots and pans! My mugs and vases! [*Angrily he turns upon his Ass, brandishing his switch.*] You'll cavort about like that in the road, will you, and ruin my pots, pans, dishes, and glass? I'll— [*Catching sight of Tom, Tom, he shakes his switch at him.*]

Tom. Tom, you good-for-naught,
You'll get a beatin' when you're caught!
I'll give you somethin' to whistle for,
And then, I vow, you'll whistle no more!

TOM, TOM: Ha, ha, ha!

[*He begins to play again. The Peddler flings his switch away and he and his Ass fall to dancing again. When Dame Trot has passed them, they fall in behind, dancing. All go out at nearer left entrance*

and come in a moment later at farther left. The Miserman enters at right, clinking some gold pieces in his hands.]

MISERMAN [*to himself*]: Ah! Seven pieces of gold 'Zekiel Hathaway paid me for my bag of wool! Seven gold pieces to add to the pile in the hole under the hearthstone! Seven!

HILDA [*pointing*]: There is the Miserman, Tom, Tom!

TUNIS: Folks say he's got gold and gold hidden away somewhere!

SALLY: He never spends any of it! He has worn that old coat as long as I can remember and they say he lives on crusts and water!

[*Tom, Tom plays louder and faster. The Miserman stops and looks up. Then he begins to dance, stiffly at first, then more nimbly. More giddily and more giddily he spins and turns as Tom, Tom plays faster and faster. Recklessly he flings his gold pieces from him.*]

BOYS AND GIRLS:

As the Miserman gloats o'er his golden pay,
Tom gets out his pipe and begins for to play;
The Miserman dances a Highland fling,
And his gold rolls away with a gleeful ring!

[*When at last Tom, Tom stops for breath, the Miserman stops, breathless. Dazedly, he looks around.*]

MISERMAN [*shrilly*]: My gold pieces! My beautiful gold pieces! My seven gold pieces! Somebody will steal them before I can find them! [*Catching sight of Tom, Tom, he shakes his fist at him.*]

You rascally, good-for-nothing fellow
With your "Over the hills" in notes so mellow;
They made me clean forget I am old
And kick up my heels and lose my gold!

TOM, TOM: Ha, ha, ha! [*He advances a step.*]

MISERMAN [*energetically motioning him back*]: Keep away there! Keep away till I find my seven gold pieces! [*Stiffly he gets down on his knees, beginning to search frantically for his gold pieces, finding one piece.*]

BOYS AND GIRLS [*running forward*]: We'll help you, Mr. Miserman!

MISERMAN [*motioning them back*]: No! No! No! You will keep my gold pieces if you find them!

BOYS AND GIRLS: Oh, no, we will not! [*They go down on their knees, feeling around. Each finds one piece of money.*]

ROSS [*holding his piece up*]: Here's one, Mr. Miserman!

ZILLAH [*holding up hers*]: Here is another!

HILDA [*holding up hers*]: Here is another!

VAL: We've found all your gold pieces!

[*The Miserman gets up stiffly, and the boys and girls crowd around him, about to put the gold pieces into his out-stretched hand, when Tom, Tom begins playing again. At the first note, the Miserman begins to dance.*]

MISERMAN: Keep the gold pieces for your own! Keep them all! I have plenty more!

BOYS AND GIRLS [*dancing after Tom, Tom as he passes them*]: Oh, thank you, Mr. Miserman! [*A moment later.*]

Tom, Tom, the piper's son,
He does some good for all his fun;
At his tunes the miser turns generous
And gives his precious gold to us!

[*When the Peddler and his Ass have passed him, the Miserman dances after. All go out at nearer right entrance and a moment later come in at farther right. The Applewoman enters at left.*]

APPLEWOMAN [*in hawker's voice*]:

Red apples! Yellow apples!
One a penny! Two a penny!
Snow apples! Russet apples!
How many? How many?

TUNIS [*pointing*]: Tom, Tom, listen! The Applewoman's coming down the street!

[*Tom, Tom plays louder and faster. The Applewoman stops and looks up. Then she shifts her tray to the palm of one hand, lifts her skirts with the other, and begins to dance, her apples bounding off her tray. The faster and faster Tom, Tom plays, the faster and faster she dances.*]

BOYS AND GIRLS:

When Tom meets the Applewoman on his way,
He takes out his pipe and begins for to play;
The Applewoman dances a gay quadrille
Till she tips her tray and her apples spill!

[*When Tom, Tom stops for breath, the Applewoman stops, breathless, too. Then she notices her scattered apples and clasps her hands in despair.*]

APPLEWOMAN: Deary, deary, me! My Baldwins and Tommy Hawkins are all dusty and bruised! A body won't never buy them now! Deary, deary, me!

TOM, TOM: Ha, ha, ha!

APPLEWOMAN [*turning to him, weakly scolding*]:

Tommy, why did you go for to play
"Over the hills and far away?"
They played that tune when I was a girl
And it always sets my wits in a whirl!

[*She throws her apron over her head and cries into it.*]

BOYS AND GIRLS [*running forward*]: Never you mind, Mrs. Applewoman! We'll buy your apples! [*They pick up her tray and put it into her hands. Then they scramble about after the apples, each picking up one apple. They put their gold pieces on her tray, taking big bites out of their apples and smacking their lips.*]

APPLEWOMAN: Bless your hearts! Bless your hearts! These gold pieces will keep me and the children in buns and coals for many and many a day!

[*Tom, Tom begins to play again, proceeding on his lazy way. The boys and girls dance after him as he passes them. The Applewoman, carefully balancing her tray on both palms, dances after the Miserman as he passes her.*]

BOYS AND GIRLS:

Tom, Tom, the piper's son,
He learned to play when he was young;
But all the tunes that he can play
Is "Over the hills and far away."
Over the hills, and a great way off,
And the wind will blow my topknot off!

Tom's ever ready with his pranks,
But, nevertheless, he has our thanks,
For he makes us all feel good and gay
When "Over the hills" we hear him play,
And dance our tempers and faults away.

CURTAIN

Bye, Baby Bunting

A Christmas play in one scene for about eleven small children.

CHARACTERS

One of them is MOTHER BUNTING.
The others are SANTA'S ELVES and FAIRIES.
BABY BUNTING is a big doll in a cradle.

SCENE

[*There is a chimney place at the back of the stage. In the grate is a fire, made of logs and red tissue paper over a lighted lantern. Mother Bunting, in spectacles, is knitting the last row of a baby's stocking in a rocking chair in the center of the stage, rocking Baby Bunting's cradle with her foot. She hums the tune for a moment after the curtain goes up. The tune is "Bye, Baby Bunting."*]

MOTHER BUNTING [*softly*]:

Bye, Baby Bunting,
Daddy's gone a-hunting
To get a little rabbit skin
To wrap the Baby Bunting in.

[*Elves and Fairies, in white brownie suits and caps and fairy frocks and wings, all glittering with sparkle-snow, enter, finger raised for silence, eyes big and round, lips making a noiseless "oh!", necks craned forward. They tiptoe funnily, bending their knees and raising their feet high. When they reach the cradle, they join hands and dance around it and Mother Bunting, a comical dance, first once around them to the right, then once around them to the left, etc. Mother Bunting takes no notice of them. She hums while they sing.*]

ELVES AND FAIRIES [*singing softly*]:

I.

From the snowy regions,
Santa's elfin legions,
We've galloped down atop the back
Of one of Santa's reindeer pack.

II.

Christmas secrets maybe
We will whisper, Baby;
Cross your heart you'll stay asleep
And never listen once nor peep.

III.

Secrets you've ne'er heard of,
Not a single word of!
Of goings-on away up North,
Concerning you, and so on forth.

IV.

Clad against the weather,
Spirits in fine feather,
Old Santa's strapped his snowshoes on—
And where do you suppose he's gone?

V.

While the whole world over,
Like young pigs in clover,
The children laugh the hours away,
Anticipating Christmas Day.

VI.

With its puddings steaming,
Christmas trees a-gleaming,
And holly wreaths and mistletoe,
And dolls that dance and trains that go.

[*Let go hands, lift finger, open eyes wide, utter a noiseless "oh!", and jump back a step, still keeping, however, in a ring. Mother Bunting, paying no attention to them, leans over the cradle, rocking it faster, as if Baby Bunting had stirred.*]

MOTHER BUNTING:

Bye, Baby Bunting,
Daddy's gone a-hunting
To get a little rabbit skin
To wrap the Baby Bunting in.

[*She takes up her knitting again, as if Baby Bunting is still once more. Elves and Fairies join hands and dance around the cradle as before.*]

ELVES AND FAIRIES:

VII.

Bye, Baby Bunting,
Santa's gone a-hunting
To get a little Teddy bear
For Baby's stocking, we declare!

MOTHER BUNTING [*drawing needles out of stocking and holding it up*]: There!

[*Elves and Fairies let go hands, jump back a startled step, open their eyes, etc., as before, and go out as they entered, only much faster. Mother Bunting, still humming, gets up and crosses to fireplace with the stocking. As the curtain goes down she is hanging it up.*]

CURTAIN

The Ginger-Bread Man

A play of the Trades in four scenes. For any number of children.

TIME

Merchantmen's Day, a gala day.

PLACE

Scenes I and IV, a street of London. Scene II, the Ginger-bread Man's shop. Scene III, the market place.

CHARACTERS

THE GINGER-BREAD MAN,

A group of boys and girls, including CYRIL, TOM, WITHERS, LESLIE, BOB, JENNIE, MARY, HARRIET, ANN, and CONSTANCE,

THE MERCHANTMEN, a larger group of children.

SETTING

None for street and market place scenes. For the shop scene there is a counter with a few candies and little frosted cakes on it and a lot of ginger-bread boys. On the wall hang an old print and a bird cage. On the counter is a cat curled up asleep. A bell is fastened over right entrance and a string is attached to the bell.

ENTRANCES

Two, one to the right, one to the left.

COSTUMES

GINGER-BREAD-MAN—He is a bent, old man with straggling white hair under a black silk skullcap, in a shapeless, shiny jacket and baggy trousers. His face is lined and he wears steel-rimmed spectacles, over which he peers in a jolly fashion.

BOYS AND GIRLS—Ordinary suits and frocks.

MERCHANTMEN—Long capes of scarlet cheesecloth, bordered at the bottom with a band of yellow or a strip of gold paper, and with a silk handkerchief folded cornerwise for a collar. Scarlet tam-o'-shanter caps, turned up at one side with a black feather.

The group is divided into twelve smaller groups and one Banker. The groups are: Bakers, Drapers, Grocers, Haberdashers, Candy Shopkeepers, Furniture Shopkeepers, Fruiterers, Toy Shopkeepers, Butchers, Apothecaries, News-standkeepers, Jewelsmiths, and Fishwives. The Banker is temporary leader. The first of each group carries a yellow banner with some sign of the group's trade cut out of different colored cloth or paper and pasted or stitched on—mortar and pestle for the Apothecaries, butcher knife for the Butchers, loaf of bread for the Bakers, a fish for the Fishwives, etc.

SCENE I

[*Boys and girls are having a good time in the street, playing tag, marbles, etc.*]

BOYS AND GIRLS [*tune, "Go in and out the windows"*]:

Come sing and laugh and frolic,
Come sing and laugh and frolic,
Come sing and laugh and frolic,
Today is gala day.

JENNIE: Oh, I'm glad the Merchantmen of Londontown have gala day today!

TOM: So'm I, for then the schoolmaster gave us holiday, too!

HARRIET: To play in!

MARY: And sing in!

WITHERS: And have a good time in! Hurrah!

ANN: Sh! Sh! There come the Merchantmen!

[*She points to right. A tramping of feet is heard. Boys and girls gather out of the way, some standing, some flinging themselves down on the floor.*]

BOYS AND GIRLS:

Hey diddle, dinketty, pompetty, pet,
The merchants of London, they wear scarlet;
Silk in the collar, and gold in the hem,
So merrily march the merchantmen.

[*Merchantmen enter at right, waving banners. They march slowly by two's, except the banner bearer of each group. The Banker is at the head of the lines. As each group holds the center of the stage, its members sing their stanza—if not enough children compose a group to sing by themselves, the groups ahead and behind sing with them. The lines go out at left.*]

MERCHANTMEN [*tune, "Here we come gathering nuts and may"*]:

Here we come marching through Londontown,
Londontown, Londontown,
Here we come marching through Londontown,
The merry merchants of London.

BANKER:

To me you come bringing your pence and crowns,
Pence and crowns, pence and crowns,
To me you come bringing your pence and crowns,
To put in the Bank of England.

BAKERS:

From us you come purchasing currant buns,
Currant buns, currant buns,
From us you come purchasing currant buns,
And tarts and caraway cookies.

DRAPERS:

From us you come purchasing prints and silks,
Prints and silks, prints and silks,
From us you come purchasing prints and silks,
And reels of twist and cotton.

GROCERS:

From us you come purchasing tea and spice,
Tea and spice, tea and spice,
From us you come purchasing tea and spice,
Tobacco, and tapioca.

HABERDASHERS:

From us you come purchasing silk cravats,
Silk cravats, silk cravats,
From us you come purchasing silk cravats,
And papers of pins and needles.

CANDY SHOPKEEPERS:

From us you come purchasing peppermints,
Peppermints, peppermints,
From us you come purchasing peppermints,
And sugared citron and taffy.

FURNITURE SHOPKEEPERS:

From us you come purchasing trundle beds,
Trundle beds, trundle beds,
From us you come purchasing trundle beds,
And Chippendale tables and sofas.

FRUITERERS:

From us you come purchasing oranges,
Oranges, oranges,
From us you come purchasing oranges,
And apples and figs and bananas.

TOY SHOPKEEPERS:

From us you come purchasing bubble pipes,
Bubble pipes, bubble pipes,
From us you come purchasing bubble pipes,
And dolls and tramcars at Christmas.

BUTCHERS:

From us you come purchasing roasts of beef,
Roasts of beef, roasts of beef,
From us you come purchasing roasts of beef,
And legs of mutton and bacon.

APOTHECARIES:

From us you come purchasing pills and scent,
Pills and scent, pills and scent,
From us you come purchasing pills and scent,
And soap and lotions and bitters.

NEWS-STANDKEEPERS:

From us you come buying the Times and Punch,
Times and Punch, Times and Punch,
From us you come buying the Times and Punch,
And Tid-bits and John o' London.

JEWELSMITHS:

From us you come purchasing silver spoons,
Silver spoons, silver spoons,
From us you come purchasing silver spoons,
And earrings and cameo brooches.

FISHWIVES:

From us you come purchasing shrimps and clams,
Shrimps and clams, shrimps and clams,
From us you come purchasing shrimps and clams,
And periwinkles and cockles.

[*Boys and girls collect in group after last Fish-wife has disappeared.*]

CONSTANCE: I didn't see the Ginger-bread Man.

LESLIE: I didn't either.

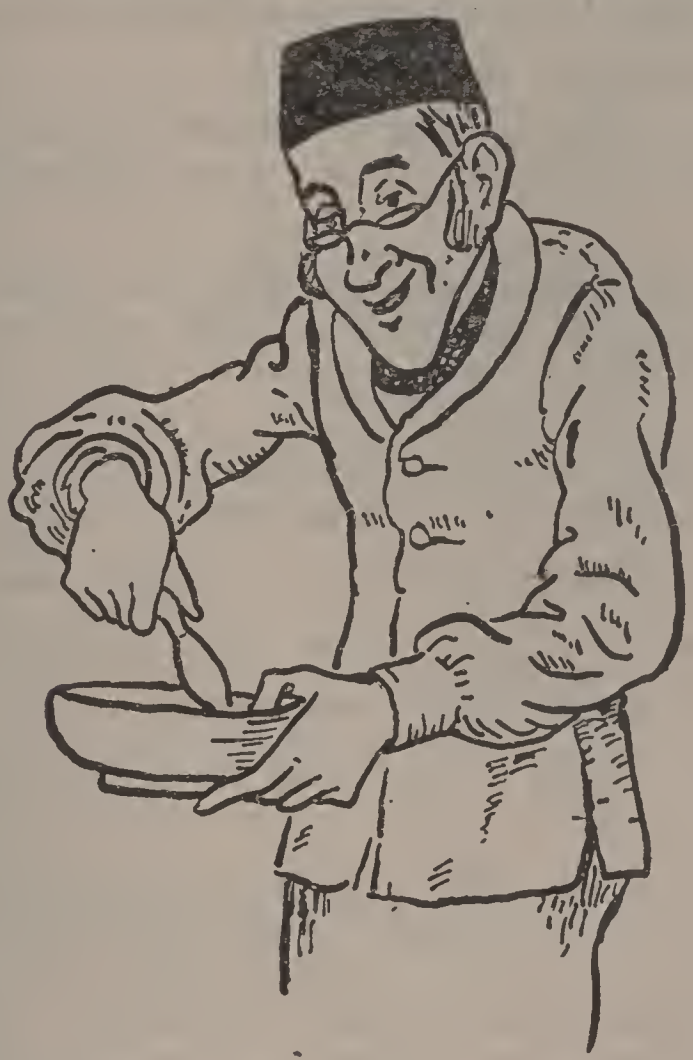
BOB: The Ginger-bread Man didn't march with the Merchantmen.

TOM: I wonder why.

HARRIET: Let's go to his shop and find out. [*Run out.*]

SCENE II

[*The Ginger-bread Man's shop has nobody in it. The boys and girls troop in at right, tinkling the bell over the door. They crowd along counter and the Ginger-bread Man comes in at left.*]



GINGER-BREAD MAN: Good-morning to you, brave lads and fair lassies, and what shall it be this bonny morning?

MARY [*pointing*]: I'll have that Jim Crow.

TOM: And I'll have a ha'penny's worth of cinamon drops.

[*Ginger-bread Man gives Mary the cooky and Tom a handful of candies, taking their pennies and putting them in his box.*]

WITHERS: We don't have to go to school today.

GINGER-BREAD MAN: So I see. So I see.

JENNIE: It's gala day! It's Merchantmen's Day!

GINGER-BREAD MAN: Ah, yes.

CYRIL: We saw the merchants of London marching down the street. Didn't you want to march with them?

HARRIET [*when the Ginger-bread Man does not answer*]: The Merchantmen are wearing scarlet!

ANN: Silk in the collar!

CONSTANCE: And gold in the hem!

GINGER-BREAD MAN: Ah, yes.

BOB: They've gone to the market place now.

LESLIE: To vote.

GINGER-BREAD MAN: Ah, yes.

CYRIL: Didn't you want to march with them? Didn't you?

GINGER-BREAD MAN: We-el,—you see, Master Cyril, this is how 'tis. Scarlet with silk in the collar and gold in the hem takes many shillings, and Jim Crows and candies bring in only ha'pennies, and there's Singin' Dick there to buy birdseed and cuttlefishbone for, and Mistress Tabs here to buy milk and pigs' kidneys for, besides tea and biscuits for a stiff old fellow what can't be up and getting himself much of a livin' any more. What was it you said you'd have, Master Leslie?

LESLIE [*looking around*]: You haven't any seed-cakes this morning?

GINGER-BREAD MAN: Seedcakes is it? A fresh box-ful I was opening when the bell went tinkle-ting. Just a jiffy!

[*Goes out at left. Boys and girls consult together in low tones.*]

CYRIL: The merchants of London march again before tea. I wish the Ginger-bread Man might march with them.

LESLIE: I have ha'penny.

CONSTANCE: So have I.

JENNIE: I have tuppence.

[*The rest show empty palms ruefully.*]

WITHERS: Thrippence won't buy scarlet with silk in the collar and gold in the hem.

CYRIL: I wish he might march, though. Can't we think of something?

HARRIET: Let's—

MARY [*nudging her*]: Sh!

[*Ginger-bread Man returns with seedcakes and gives Leslie one, taking his coin in exchange.*]

GINGER-BREAD MAN: So! And is that all I can sell you this morning? Then, here, Miss Constance, you shall hold Mistress Tabs a while and all of you shall listen to Singin' Dick do his finest. [*Whistles to canary.*]

CONSTANCE: Not this morning, thank you, Mister Ginger-bread Man.

SOME OF THE OTHERS: We have affairs of importance to attend to.

GINGER-BREAD MAN: 'Tis good-morning then?

BOYS AND GIRLS: It's good-morning then. [*Go out, tinkling bell merrily.*]

SCENE III

[*Merchantmen are seated in single, or double—according to how many there are of them—semicircle on the floor, facing front. The Banker faces them. Each has pencil and slip of paper. Boys and girls slip in and stand at one side listening and watching.*]

BANKER [*displaying a banner decorated with all the signs of the other banners and a cape similar to the other scarlet capes except that it has a double band of yellow or gold at the bottom*]: Our leader's banner! Our leader's robe! Who is to bear it? Who is to wear it? The best man among us when we march before the Lord Mayor at teatime. Who is the best? We shall see! We shall see! But before we vote let each man tell us why we should vote him best among us. Grocers!

GROCERS: We sell flour and salt. Can a body do without either?

BANKER: Butchers!

BUTCHERS: We sell red beef to make stout muscles.

BANKER: Bakers!

BAKERS: We sell the staff o' life.

BANKER: Drapers!

DRAPERS: We sell patterns of cloth for gentlemen's shirts and ladies' bodices.

BANKER: Toy Shopkeepers!

TOY SHOPKEEPERS: We sell picture books and wax dolls for the children.

BANKER: News-standkeepers!

NEWS-STANDKEEPERS: We sell the latest news and the best essays from all over the Kingdom.

BANKER: Haberdashers!

HABERDASHERS: We sell pins and needles. What housewife can get along without her pins and needles?

BANKER: Furniture Shopkeepers!

FURNITURE SHOPKEEPERS: We sell chairs and tables. A man must have his chair to sit in after tea and his table for his checkerboard.

BANKER: Apothecaries!

APOTHECARIES: We sell cod liver oil and smelling salts.

BANKER: Fruiterers!

FRUITERERS: We sell lemons and dates from far lands.

BANKER: Candy Shopkeepers!

CANDY SHOPKEEPERS: We sell lollipops and lozenges to the delight of young and old.

BANKER: Jewelsmiths!

JEWELSMITHS: We sell gold rings for the white fingers of highborn ladies.

BANKER: Fishwives!

FISHWIVES: We sell morsels that melt in the mouth fresh from the sea.

BANKER: And I make your pence and shillings grow into crowns and pounds. Now—

BOYS AND GIRLS [*singing softly*]:

The Ginger-bread Man, the Ginger-bread Man,
And don't you remember the Ginger-bread Man?

[*These two lines have the swing of the refrain of the stanzas of "Poor Babes in the Wood." Merchantmen look up, pencils poised.*]

ONE MERCHANTMAN [*reminiscently*]: There used to be the best ginger-bread man round the corner when I was a boy in—

ANOTHER: There was one out Somerset way now—

ANOTHER: But the ginger-bread man on Clarence Road in old Hale! There was a ginger-bread man for you!

ANOTHER: There was an old fellow next the Green Man in Wrexham sold such ginger-bread as I've ne'er bit into from that day to this!

MERCHANTMEN [*softly singing*]:

The ginger-bread man, the ginger-bread man,
And don't you remember the ginger-bread man?

SCENE IV

[*Boys and girls are skipping about happily.*]

BOYS AND GIRLS [*singing*]:

Come sing and laugh and frolic,
Come sing and laugh and frolic,
Come sing and laugh and frolic,
Today is gala day.

MARY [*pointing*]: There come the Merchantmen!

[*Boys and girls gather out of the way in a group.*]

BOYS AND GIRLS:

Hey diddle, dinketty, pompetty, pet,
The merchants of London, they wear scarlet;
Silk in the collar, and gold in the hem,
So merrily march the merchantmen.

[*Merchantmen enter at left, march across stage, and out at right, the Ginger-bread Man at their head in the robe of honor, carrying the banner of honor. The Banker is at the end of the lines.*]

MERCHANTMEN [*singing*]:

I.

Here we come marching through Londontown,
Londontown, Londontown,
Here we come marching through Londontown,
The merry merchants of London.

II.

Who is the merchant that leads us all,
Leads us all, leads us all,
Who is the merchant that leads us all,
And carries our banner of honor?

III.

Dressed in scarlet with silk and gold,
Silk and gold, silk and gold,
Dressed in scarlet with silk and gold,
In double bands at the bottom.

IV.

None but the best-loved, the Ginger-bread Man,
Ginger-bread Man, Ginger-bread Man,
None but the best-loved, the Ginger-bread Man,
The choice of the merchants of London.

[*Boys throw their caps up, girls clap their hands.*]

BOYS AND GIRLS:

Hail to the choice of the Merchantmen,
Merchantmen, Merchantmen,
Hail to the choice of the Merchantmen,
The Ginger-bread Man of London!

CURTAIN

I Had a Little Nut Tree

The biggest little play in ten scenes. For about sixty boys and girls.

CHARACTERS

MARGOT, a poor little girl in a garret,
TERRY, a poor boy and Margot's playmate,
THE DANCERS, about eight girls,
THE SINGERS, about eight girls,
THE MINSTRELS, about seven boys and one girl,
THE SCHOLARS, four boys and four girls,
THE GARDENERS, four boys,
THE SAILORS, about six boys,
THE KING OF SPAIN'S DAUGHTER,
HER ATTENDANTS, two HERALDS, a PAGE, LADIES-IN WAITING, and MINISTERS.

SUGGESTIONS

The entire action takes place in the garret where Margot lives, but, in order to indicate elapse of time, the play is divided into ten scenes. No change of scenery is necessary. Two minutes of music may separate the scenes.

Members of the school band should be picked for the Minstrels. Their selections, the songs of the singers, and the dances of the dancers should be some the children already have learned in their school work—school tunes, school songs, folk or fancy dances.

COSTUMES

MARGOT—Faded and ragged, shoes and stockings in holes, hair tangled.

TERRY—Ragged, bareheaded, barefooted.

THE DANCERS—Short, full, pink dresses, which may be of tissue paper, wreaths of pink flowers in their hair, big, fancy fans.

THE SINGERS—Long, yellow, Grecian robes, a black cord knotted about the waist, black bandeaux.

THE MINSTRELS—Fantastic black and scarlet suits and tasseled caps. One has a drum, another a horn, another clapping blocks, etc. The girl has a tambourine.

THE SCHOLARS—Black caps and gowns such as college seniors wear. Each carries his particular book.

THE GARDENERS—Picturesque old suits and caps. The first has an orange in his pocket, the second an apple, the third has a handful of roses, the fourth has a handful of daffodils.

THE SAILORS—Sailor suits and caps.

THE KING OF SPAIN'S DAUGHTER—Spanish robes of state, long cape, slippers, and coronet of gold.

ATTENDANTS—Fine, Spanish court clothes.

SETTING

The garret Margot lives in. An old table is pushed against back wall, and there is a rocker that creaks and that has lost one arm. A window is supposed to be in left wall; a blind is rolled crookedly and pinned, and there are sagging sash curtains. A soap box is in a corner and there are a handless and cracked pitcher and mug on the table. The entrance is to the right.

SCENE I

[*Margot creaks back and forth in the rocker, munching a crust and wiping tears away on her sleeve. Terry enters, whistling, hands behind his back. He stops whistling when he sees Margot is crying.*]

TERRY: Hello! What's the matter, Margot?

MARGOT: This crust is so small, Terry.

TERRY: Never mind, Margot! Guess what I have!

MARGOT: For me?

TERRY: For you.

MARGOT: A flower to put in my hair and an orange to eat and a book to read out of.

TERRY [*crestfallen*]: No—o— There! [*Holds out his hands with a little leafless plant, root and all, in them.*]

MARGOT [*jumping up, dropping her crust, and taking plant eagerly but carefully*]: Where did you get it, Terry? What is it? What shall we plant it in?

TERRY: The flowerman downstairs gave it to me. It's a nut tree he said. See, some of its branches got broken and so he couldn't sell it.

MARGOT: Oh, I'm glad they got broken [*running to table and picking up pitcher*]! Can we plant it in this?

TERRY: Isn't it too big?

MARGOT: But maybe the little nut tree will grow big.

TERRY: Maybe it will so. Come on, let's go dig some dirt. [*Takes pitcher, seizes her by the hand, and they run out.*]

SCENE II

[*Margot creaks gently to and fro in the rocker, facing the window. The soap box is under the window and on it is the nut tree planted in the pitcher. It is a tall little tree now, still leafless. Conspicuously among the branches hang a shining silver nutmeg and a glittering golden pear. Terry enters.*]

TERRY: Oh, Margot,—

MARGOT [*running to pull Terry over to window*]: Look, Terry, look!

I had a little nut tree;
Nothing would it bear
But a silver nutmeg
And a golden pear.

TERRY: They're pretty enough, but you can't eat a silver nutmeg, Margot, and read out of a golden pear.

MARGOT [*laughing*]: They're so pretty I forget I'm hungry looking at them.

[*They are silent a minute or two, standing hand in hand looking at the nut tree.*]

TERRY: I'm going to work, Margot. That's what I came up to tell you. I can't come to play any

more. It's time I went to work. See how big I am [*stretching and standing very tall and straight*]! Soon I'll be as big as a man.

MARGOT: Oh, oh, what you going to do, Terry?

TERRY [*grandly, if vaguely*]: Oh, work. Then when I've made lots of money, Margot, I'm coming back for you. You shall have a whole orchard of oranges to eat then and a whole greenhouse of roses to put in your hair and a whole library of books to read out of.

MARGOT [*clapping her hands*]: Then we'll be glad, won't we [*plucking a twig off the nut tree and pulling it through Terry's buttonhole*]? A bit of my nut tree for luck!

SCENE III

[*Margot is watering her nut tree with the cup. A rap is heard on the door.*]

MARGOT: Come in!

[*The Minstrels enter.*]

FIRST MINSTREL [*bowing*]: A pretty morning to a pretty miss, and is this the Margot who has a nut tree with a silver nutmeg and a golden pear?

MARGOT [*nodding*]: I'm Margot.

SECOND MINSTREL: And where is this nut tree that boy talked about all day and every day?

MARGOT [*pointing*]: Here's my nut tree.

[*The Minstrels crowd around the soap box and peer at nut tree.*]

THIRD MINSTREL: Wonderful!

FOURTH MINSTREL: Extraordinary!

FIFTH MINSTREL: Exotic!

SIXTH MINSTREL: Amazing!

MARGOT [*pulling at Seventh Minstrel's sleeve*]: Was the boy's name Terry?

SEVENTH MINSTREL [*turning to her*]: Terry he was.

MARGOT: Where is Terry? What is he doing?

EIGHTH MINSTREL: Terry carried the drum for me last week, and a good drumboy he was. We don't know where he is now. He left us to better himself, so he said.

THIRD MINSTREL [*bowing*]: And what can some jolly street minstrels do for the pretty Margot who allowed them the pleasure of seeing her nut tree?

MARGOT: If only you'd play!

SEVERAL OF THE MINSTRELS: Of course. [*They group themselves in center of room and play two or three tunes or a medley.*]

SCENE IV

[*Margot is digging about the roots of her nut tree with a stick, humming happily one of the tunes of the Minstrels. A rap sounds on the door.*]

MARGOT: Come in!

[*The Dancers trip in.*]

FIRST DANCER [*bowing*]: Is this the Miss Margot who has a nut tree with a silver nutmeg and a golden pear?

MARGOT [*nodding*]: I'm Margot.

SECOND DANCER: Where is this nut tree that boy was always talking about?

MARGOT [*pointing*]: Here's my nut tree.

[*The Dancers crowd about nut tree.*]

THIRD DANCER: Oh!

FOURTH DANCER: Ah!

FIFTH DANCER: How exquisite!

SIXTH DANCER: How the nutmeg shines!

SEVENTH DANCER: How the pear glitters!

MARGOT [*pulling at Eighth Dancer's sleeve*]: Was the boy's name Terry?

EIGHTH DANCER: Terry? Yes.

MARGOT: Where is Terry? What is he doing?

THIRD DANCER: Terry passed the programs at the show last week but he doesn't any more. We don't know where he is now. He left, he told us, to better himself.

FOURTH DANCER [*bowing*]: We wish we could do something for you, Margot, in return for the enjoyment your nut tree has given us.

MARGOT: If only you'd dance!

[*The Dancers execute several group dances, with some solo parts.*]

SCENE V

[*Margot is pinching dead ends off the twigs of her nut tree, stopping after each pinch to take one of the dance steps of the Dancers. A rap is heard.*]

MARGOT: Come in!

[*The Scholars enter.*]

FIRST SCHOLAR: Good afternoon. Are you she who has in her possession a flora rara that bears a nutmeg of silver metal and a pear of pure gold?

MARGOT: I'm Margot.

SECOND SCHOLAR: I pray you, Miss Margot, conduct us to behold the spectacle, the wonders of which that boy was at all times relating.

MARGOT: Here's my nut tree.

[*The Scholars pull out their spectacles, polish them, adjust them, and bend over the nut tree.*]

FIRST SCHOLAR [*poking a finger into the soil*]: Roots, fascicled.

SECOND SCHOLAR [*peering through magnifying glass*]: Leaves, none.

THIRD SCHOLAR [*breaking off a twig and fingering it*]: Branching, alternate.

FOURTH SCHOLAR [*pinching pear and nutmeg*]: Fruit, of two distinct varieties.

MARGOT [*plucking at Fifth Scholar's gown*]: Was the boy's name Terry?

FIFTH SCHOLAR [*looking at her over his glasses*]: Eh? Terry? Yes, I believe Terrence did refer to himself as Terry.

MARGOT: Where is Terry? What is he doing?

[*The Scholars turn reluctantly from the nut tree, taking off their glasses and returning them to their pockets.*]

SIXTH SCHOLAR: Terrence swept the college corridors last week, but he no longer follows that calling. We are not informed of his present whereabouts. He gave up his employment at the college to improve his fortunes.

SEVENTH SCHOLAR: We are greatly indebted to you, Miss Margot, for the privilege of analyzing this unique shrub.

EIGHTH SCHOLAR: We should be gratified if we might in return confer a favor upon you, Miss Margot.

MARGOT: If only I might read out of one of your books!

SEVERAL OF THE SCHOLARS: You may have them all to read.

FIFTH SCHOLAR [*putting geography into her hands*]:

This is the story
  Of the world
And the seven seas
  About it curled.

SECOND SCHOLAR [*putting physiology on top of geography*]:

This book will
  Introduce you to
The wonders hid
  Inside of you.

THIRD SCHOLAR [*putting grammar on top of physiology*]:

This book will teach
  You how to speak
Better English
  Week by week.

FOURTH SCHOLAR [*putting arithmetic on top of grammar*]:

Margot, what is
  Nine times three?

MARGOT [*shaking her head*]: I don't know.

FOURTH SCHOLAR:

Then learn your tables
  Diligently.

FIFTH SCHOLAR [*putting history on top of arithmetic*]:

This tells the tale
  From 1 B. C.
To 1923 [or whatever year it is]
  A. D.

SIXTH SCHOLAR [*putting botany on top of history*]:

You want to learn
  Of shrubs and herbs
As well as dates
  And bones and verbs.

SEVENTH SCHOLAR [*putting civics on top of botany*]:

Study your civics
  Again and again
To grow up to be
  A good citizen.

EIGHTH SCHOLAR [*putting reader on top of civics*]:

This book relates
  In verse and prose
The stories every
  Schoolchild knows.

SCENE VI

[*Margot sways back and forth in the rocker by the nut tree, the geography open on top of the pile of other books in her lap, her head bent over it.*]

MARGOT [*to herself*]: Here's my Londontown on the Thames [*English pronunciation, Tems*] and— [*A rap is heard.*] Come in!

[*The Singers enter. Margot jumps up, letting her books slide into the chair.*]

FIRST SINGER: Is this the bonny Margot that has a wonderful nut tree with a nutmeg of silver and a pear of gold?

MARGOT: I'm Margot.

SECOND SINGER: And where is this nut tree that boy was always talking about?

MARGOT: Here's my nut tree. [*The Singers crowd around the nut tree.*]

THIRD SINGER: How beautiful it is!

FOURTH SINGER: We must compose a song about it to sing at the concert.

FIFTH SINGER: How is this? [*Beginning to the tune of "Sing a Song of Sixpence."*]

Sing a song of Margot's
Garret cold and bare—

[*Hesitates for words.*]

SIXTH SINGER [*taking up the tune*]:

Save a little nut tree
With a golden pear—

MARGOT [*pulling at Seventh Singer's sleeve*]: Was the boy's name Terry?

SEVENTH SINGER: Terry was his name.

MARGOT: Where is Terry? What is he doing?

EIGHTH SINGER: Terry ran errands at the concert hall last week, but he doesn't any more. We don't know where he is now. He left to better himself.

THIRD SINGER [*returning to song*]:

And a silver nutmeg
Hanging from its boughs—

FOURTH SINGER: Come! Come! Are these kind manners? Let our song wait! We haven't thanked the bonny Margot yet for giving us the pretty motive for the stanzas.

FIFTH SINGER [*turning to Margot*]: We wish we could do something to show you how grateful we are.

MARGOT: If only you'd sing!

[*The Singers group themselves in center of room and sing several songs, some with solo or duet parts if possible.*]

SCENE VII

[*Margot is dusting the pitcher her nut tree is planted in, singing the chorus of one of the Singers' songs. A rap is heard.*]

MARGOT: Come in!

[*The Gardeners enter.*]

FIRST GARDENER [*pulling at his cap*]: Top o' the mornin', Miss, an' hare you the Margot w'at 'as a nut tree with a silver nutmeg an' a golden pear?

MARGOT: I'm Margot.

SECOND GARDENER [*rubbing his hands expectantly*]: An' w'ere his this nut tree the boy w'at weeded the flower beds were forhever atalkin' on?

MARGOT: Here's my nut tree.

[*The Gardeners crowd around the nut tree, pinching the twigs, touching the fruit, poking their fingers into the soil.*]

THIRD GARDENER: There's ne'er a shrub like hit in Covent Gardens!

FOURTH GARDENER: There's not a plant like hit in m'lord's conservatories!

FIRST GARDENER: There's not a bush like hit at Windsor Castle!

SECOND GARDENER: There's not a perhennial like hit in the Botanical Gardens!

MARGOT [*pulling at Third Gardener's sleeve*]: Was the boy that weeded the flower beds Terry?

THIRD GARDENER: Terry 'e were an' nothin' else.

MARGOT: Where is Terry? Where are the flower beds?

FOURTH GARDENER: An' that we don't rightly know, Miss,—Hi means the boy an' not the beds. 'E don't weed them no more. 'E left Saturday to better hisself. Them were 'is very words.

FIRST GARDENER: We'd like to say hour thanks, Miss, for showin' hus the bonny tree hif we honly knew 'ow now.

MARGOT: If only I might have a rose!

SECOND GARDENER [*thrusting his roses into her hand*]: Hall of them!

THIRD GARDENER [*pulling orange out of his pocket and giving it to her*]: An' 'ere's a orange!

FOURTH GARDENER [*doing likewise with his apple*]: An' 'ere's a apple!

FIRST GARDENER [*thrusting his daffodils into her hands*]: An' some daffydils!

SCENE VIII

[*Margot, a rose in her hair, a daffodil pinned on her waist, eating her orange out of one hand and her apple out of the other, the rest of her flowers in tin cans on the table, sits rocking beside the nut tree. A rap is heard.*]

SAILORS [*outside*]: Ahoy! Ahoy!

MARGOT: Come in!

[*Sailors enter with rolling walk. They touch their forelocks to Margot.*]

FIRST SAILOR: Howdy! Bless me bottom sail an' is this Margot?

MARGOT: I'm Margot.

SECOND SAILOR: Bless me top sail an' w'ere's that nut tree with the gold an' silver fruit that cabin boy was forhever singin' the praises of?

MARGOT: Here's my nut tree. [*Sailors crowd around nut tree.*]

THIRD SAILOR: Shiver my timbers!

FOURTH SAILOR: Bless me buttons!

FIFTH SAILOR: The boy were right!

SIXTH SAILOR: That he were, mate!

MARGOT [*plucking at First Sailor's sleeve*]: Was the cabin boy's name Terry?

FIRST SAILOR: That it were, miss.

MARGOT: Where is Terry? What is he doing?

SECOND SAILOR: An' that we don't know. 'E went ashore at a Spanish port to better 'is fortunes 'e says, an' we see 'im no more.

THIRD SAILOR: An' w'hat could a jolly sailor an' 'is rollickin' mates do to say thanky?

MARGOT: If only you'd dance the hornpipe!

FOURTH SAILOR [*bobbing to her*]: 'Eartily, lass!

[*Sailors dance a hornpipe and lustily sing.*]

SAILORS:

Fifteen men on the good ship Belle,
Yo, ho, yo, an' a boy sung bold,
"A meg I've seen with a silver shell,
Yo, ho, yo, an' a pear of gold."

SCENE IX

[*Margot is dancing a few steps of the hornpipe and shouting last line of the Sailors' song. A trumpet sounds twice outside. A sharp knock is heard on the door.*]

MARGOT: Come in!

[*The Heralds, blowing two blasts on their trumpets again, enter, followed by the King of Spain's Daughter, a Page holding her train, Ladies-in-Waiting, and Ministers.*]

FIRST HERALD: This is the little girl who has a nut tree that bears a silver nutmeg and a golden pear?

MARGOT [*curtsying*]: I'm Margot.

SECOND HERALD [*sweeping floor with hat*]: The King of Spain's Daughter!

MARGOT [*curtsying to princess*]: Your servant!

THE KING OF SPAIN'S DAUGHTER: Will you show us, Margot, the nut tree our lacky is always singing about as he scours the pots in the scullary? We hear him every morning when we go to walk.

MARGOT [*curtsying*]: Here's my nut tree, Highness.

[*Princess bends over nut tree, daintily touching the pear and nutmeg. Retinue crowd up a decorous step behind her.*]

THE KING OF SPAIN'S DAUGHTER: We never beheld the like before! We feel as if we were in some far country. [*She turns to Margot. Retinue resume proper distance and stiff, court manners.*] We wish we could do you as great a happiness, Margot.

MARGOT: You can, Highness. Is the lacky's name Terry?

THE KING OF SPAIN'S DAUGHTER: Terry? [*Turning to a Minister.*] Manuel, is the lacky's name Terry?

THE MINISTER [*bowing*]: It is.

MARGOT: Is Terry still at the castle? Is he still your lacky, Highness? And is the castle away off in Spain?

THE KING OF SPAIN'S DAUGHTER: We know he was our lacky boy just before we sailed away because we heard him singing about Margot's little nut tree as we stepped into our carriage. And the castle is away off in Spain [*looking around room and back at Margot*]. But is there not something more we could do to thank you?

MARGOT: If only I might touch your cape, Highness!

A MINISTER [*coming forward*]: Ask something else, child, like a doll or a velvet hood. One may not finger the King of Spain's Daughter's royal robes.

THE KING OF SPAIN'S DAUGHTER [*motioning him aside*]: Come here, Margot. [*Margot steps nearer to princess, who slips her cape off and puts it around Margot's shoulders, completely covering the faded dress. Stoops and begins to unbuckle slipper.*] You shall have our royal cape and slippers and brooch for your very own, Margot.

SCENE X

[*Margot, in cape, slippers, and brooch, stands by her nut tree, a piece of broken mirror propped against the pitcher, twisting and turning to see herself. Terry, in splendid Spanish array and carrying a velvet hat with a long plume, enters.*]

TERRY: Hello!

MARGOT [*turning and staring*]: It's—it is Terry! [*Running forward, then stopping abashed.*] How splendid you are!

TERRY [*sweeping the floor with his hat*]: Your knight, Margot!

MARGOT: I'm so glad—for you.

TERRY: It's your doing, Margot. The King of Spain's Daughter knighted me because my singing told her of your little nut tree with the silver nutmeg and golden pear.

MARGOT [*clapping her hands, but half-heartedly*]:

I had a little nut tree;
Something did it bear
Besides a silver nutmeg
And a golden pear.

TERRY: You don't look as if you were glad.

MARGOT: Spain is so far away.

TERRY [*laughing*]: But your nut tree bore something else, too. Something for you!

MARGOT: Yes, indeed! Dances and songs and roses and books and oranges and—

TERRY: Ladyhood! The King of Spain's Daughter sent me to fetch you to be a lady at the King's court.

MARGOT: A lady at the King of Spain's court? Me!

TERRY: A lady at the King of Spain's court. You! That's what comes from tending a little broken plant.

MARGOT:

I had a little nut tree;
  Nothing would it bear,
But a silver nutmeg
  And a golden pear.

The King of Spain's Daughter
  Came to visit me,
And all was because
  Of my little nut tree.

I skipped over water,
  I danced over sea,
And all the birds in the air
  Couldn't catch me.

CURTAIN

Twinkle-Twinkle

A choice little playlet in one scene. For about thirteen boys and girls.

CHARACTERS

One of the boys is TED.
The others and the girls are STAR SPRITES.

COSTUMES

Ted has on a sleeping garment.

The Star Sprites have on white stockings with big pom-poms at their ankles, and they wear white dresses and suits and little star caps of white tissue paper. They carry stars, ten or twelve inches in diameter, made of cardboard and covered with silver paper. A strip of cloth is pasted on the back for the children to slip their hands through. They carry the stars as warriors of old carried their shields.

SCENE

[*The stage is dimly lighted. Ted is sitting on a hassock in the center of the stage, elbows on knees, chin in hands, gazing up overhead.*]

TED [*saying or singing*]:

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are,
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky!

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.

[*He yawns, drops his head upon his arms, fast asleep. The Star Sprites enter on tiptoe. They advance warily, ready to flee if Ted stirs. When they have made sure he is asleep, they become bolder and dance in a ring about him, thrusting their stars this way and that and behind them to suit the words. They sing softly to the tune of "Twinkle, twinkle, little star," in a merrily mocking manner.*]

STAR SPRITES:

I.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How you wonder what we are,
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky!

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How you wonder what we are!

II.

Proper answers we know well,
But we'll never, never tell
What we are nor how our light
Twinkles, twinkles all the night.

Twinkle, twinkle, we know well,
But we'll never, never tell!

[*They nod their heads at "know well," and shake them at "never, never tell."*]

III.

Twinkle, twinkle, off and on,
Now we're there and now we're gone!
Now we hide and now we peek,
Frolicking at hide-and-seek.

Twinkle, twinkle, off and on,
Now we're there and now we're gone.

IV.

Twinkle through an orange tree;
On a man-of-war at sea:
Through the crowded Ghetto panes;
Over lonely, country lanes;

Right above your cellar door;
Over distant Singapore.

V.

Twinkle over snowy lands;
Over burning, desert sands;
Down on lions roaming wild;
Down on lambs so shy and mild;

Over castles all alight;
Over huts as dark as night.

VI.

Peep through blooming cherry trees
On the tucked-in Japanese;
On the little Esquimaux,
Fast asleep in beds of snow;

On the nodding Highland lads,
Tugging at their kilted plaids.

VII.

Twinkle, twinkle, out we go!
Twinkle, twinkle, in we glow!
Playing tap-I-spy afar,
How you wonder what we are!

Twinkle, twinkle, in we glow!
Twinkle, twinkle, out we go!

[*Ted stretches, lifts his head, and yawns. The Star Sprites disappear in a twinkling, half skipping out at left, half at right. Ted rubs his eyes open, yawning again, until he is wide awake. He looks around him eagerly, then up overhead.*]

I.

Little stars, I do declare,
You are twinkling still up there,
Just a moment's time ago
You were twinkling here below!

How did you return so soon,
Were you wearing giant's shoon?

II.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are,
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky!

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.

STAR SPRITES [*very softly behind the scenes*]:

Twinkle, twinkle, we know well,
But we'll never, never tell.

CURTAIN

Nanny Etticoat

A gay little play in one scene. For thirty-two children.

CHARACTERS

NANNY ETTICOAT,
POLLY FLINDERS,
CURLY LOCKS,
BO-PEEP,
TOMMY TUCKER,
PETER, PETER,
BOY BLUE,
DOCTOR FAUSTUS,
JACK,
JILL,
SIMPLE SIMON,
POLLY-PUT-THE-KETTLE-ON,
SUKEY-TAKE-IT-OFF-AGAIN,
THE HAYMAKERS, three boys,
THE OLD-WOMAN-WHO LIVED IN-A-SHOE,
HER CHILDREN—The boys are EB, LESTER LEROY, SAMUEL, WILLIAM RANDOLPH, JOHNNY, and POSY. The girls are MARY 'LIZ'BETH, MIRANDY, EMMY, TIDY, CALISTA BABETTE, and ANNIE.
MARY, MARY,
HARRY,
JACK-BE-NIMBLE.

COSTUMES

NANNY ETTICOAT—A capelike dress of white that touches the floor, gathers up around her neck, and conceals her arms, which she keeps close to her sides. On her head is a little cap of white, topped with a twist of flame color. This is the flame of the candle.

POLLY FLINDERS—Pretty white dress, stockings, and slippers. The front of her dress has several brown patches with jagged edges pasted or basted on for the burned holes.

CURLY LOCKS—Curly hair. Dainty clothes.

BO-PEEP—Prettily dressed in flowered muslin and a flower-trimmed shade hat. She carries a beribboned crook.

TOMMY TUCKER—A little boy in an Eton jacket. He has an enormous slice of buttered white bread.

PETER, PETER—Orange crepe paper collar and cuffs. He has a large wedge of pumpkin pie.

BOY BLUE—Blue overalls and shirt and big straw hat. He has a horn.

DOCTOR FAUSTUS—Black cap and gown, spectacles, book, and switch.

JACK—Overalls, big straw hat, barefooted.

JILL—Play apron, sunbonnet hanging down her back, barefooted. Jack and Jill carry a water pail between them.

SIMPLE SIMON—Picturesquely clad in an odd assortment of bright-hued garments. He has a long gad rigged up as a fishpole, and a tin pail.

POLLY-PUT THE-KETTLE-ON and SUKEY-TAKE-IT-OFF-AGAIN—Pretty dresses and little ruffled, white caps and aprons.

HAYMAKERS—Overalls, big straw hats, and red handkerchiefs hanging out of their pockets. They carry rakes. One has an old tin bucket.

THE OLD-WOMAN-WHO-LIVED-IN-THE-SHOE—Funnily old-fashioned.

HER CHILDREN—Happy-go-luckily clad (like the Ruggleses).

MARY, MARY—Pretty dress and a flower-laden shade hat. She carries a shining sprinkling can.

HARRY—Ordinary little-boy clothes.

JACK-BE-NIMBLE—Black clown suit and cap with orange neck ruff, cap band, instep pom-poms, etc.

ENTRANCES

The stage has two, one to the right and one to the left.

SCENE

[*A candlestick is made of a circle of cardboard, about three feet across, the edge turned up a few inches all around, and the whole covered with gold paper, silver paper, or yellow paper. It is placed on the floor well to the right and front of the stage. Nanny Etticoat stands in the middle of it, motionless. Tommy Tucker, Peter, Peter, and Boy Blue come in at right, Tommy Tucker taking a bite of his bread, Peter, Peter taking a bite of his pie, Boy Blue blowing his horn.*]

PETER, PETER [*pointing his finger at Tommy Tucker*]: Ho, ho!

Little Tommy Tucker
Sang for his supper;
What did they give him?
White bread and butter!

I've got pumpkin pie hot out of the oven! Ho, ho!

TOMMY TUCKER: White bread and butter is better than pumpkin pie, Peter, Peter.

PETER, PETER: Ho, ho!

TOMMY TUCKER: Well, it is!

[*Polly Flinders, Curly Locks, and Bo-peep dance in at right.*]

POLLY FLINDERS: Boy Blue, what are Peter, Peter and Tommy Tucker quarreling about?

BOY BLUE: Bread and pie, that's all, Polly Flinders!

[*He blows his horn to drown out Tommy Tucker's and Peter, Peter's "'Tis" and "'Tisn't's."*]

CURLY LOCKS:

Boy Blue, Boy Blue,
Stop blowing your horn,
The cows will be coming
Out of the corn!

[*She looks timidly behind her.*]

PETER, PETER: Or the sheep from the meadow, Curly Locks!

BO-PEEP: I wish my sheep would come for your horn, Boy Blue!

I fell asleep
And lost my sheep,
And can't tell where to find them!

PETER, PETER:

Leave them alone
And they'll come home
And bring their tails behind them!

BO-PEEP: I wish they would!

POLLY FLINDERS [*spying Nanny Etticoat*]: There's Nanny Etticoat!

[*They dance around Nanny Etticoat, singing to the tune of "Ring around a Rosy."*]

ALL:

Ring around our Nanny,
Better loved than any,
For when the daylight goes
She lights us with her glowing nose.

[*Nanny Etticoat lets her shoulders sag slightly.*]

TOMMY TUCKER [*pointing*]: Look! Look!

ALL [*standing still and exclaiming*]:

Nanny Etticoat
In a white petticoat
And a red nose;
The longer she lives,
The shorter she grows!

[*Curly Locks begins to cry.*]

POLLY FLINDERS: What's the matter, Curly Locks?

CURLY LOCKS: If Nanny Etticoat goes on growing shorter and shorter, there'll be nothing left of her pretty soon!

BO-PEEP: Curly Locks! How can you say such a thing? [*Bo-peep begins to cry.*]

CURLY LOCKS [*weeping harder*]: We-el, will there, Bo-peep?

POLLY FLINDERS [*putting the skirt of her dress up to her face*]: Dear, dear!

[*Tommy Tucker surreptitiously wipes his eyes with his sleeve. Peter, Peter sniffs hard. Boy Blue looks sober. Nanny Etticoat lowers her shoulders slightly again.*]

BOY BLUE [*sharply*]: Curly Locks, stop crying! Stop crying, Bo-peep! Polly Flinders, I'm ashamed of you! Why, you never cried once when your mother came and caught you sitting in the cinders warming your pretty little toes and whipped you for spoiling your nice new clothes! This is no time to cry!

PETER, PETER: No! This is the time to do!

[*The girls wipe their eyes.*]

POLLY FLINDERS: Do what? What can we do?

[*All are silent a moment, pondering.*]

TOMMY TUCKER [*jumping up and down*]: Have a bite of white bread and butter, Nanny Etticoat. White bread and butter will make you grow.

[*He gives her a bite of his bread. All intently watch results. As she finishes eating the bite, Nanny Etticoat slumps her shoulders down a little.*]

PETER, PETER: White bread and butter! Ho, ho! Have a bite of pumpkin pie hot out of the oven, Nanny Etticoat. Pumpkin pie will make you grow!

[*He gives her a bite of his pie. Again all watch her intently. As she finishes eating, she slumps down*

a trifle in her candlestick. The girls begin to cry again. Doctor Faustus enters at left, reading his book and idly swinging his switch.]

BOY BLUE [*pointing*]: There comes Doctor Faustus. Let's ask him what to do about it. He'll know.

PETER, PETER: He will!

Doctor Faustus is a good man,
He whips his scholars now and then;
When he whips them, he makes them dance
Out of Scotland into France,
Out of France into Spain,
And then he whips them back again!

You ask him, Tommy Tucker!

TOMMY TUCKER: You, Polly Flinders!

POLLY FLINDERS: You, Curly Locks!

[*Children hang back, keeping an eye on Doctor Faustus' switch, as Curly Locks steps forward to meet him as he nears them in his walk across the stage.*]

CURLY LOCKS [*curtsying*]: Please, Doctor Faustus, will you tell us what to do about it?

DOCTOR FAUSTUS [*looking at her severely over his spectacles*]: What to do about it? About what? Be explicit!

CURLY LOCKS [*pointing*]

Nanny Etticoat
In a white petticoat
And a red nose;
The longer she lives,
The shorter she grows!

DOCTOR FAUSTUS: Put her out, of course! Dullards!

[*He glares at them over his spectacles and cracks his switch. The boys and Polly Flinders retreat a step. Then he resumes his reading and goes on and*

out at right. As soon as he disappears, the children clap their hands and jump up and down.]

TOMMY TUCKER [*looking around*]: Where is the water?

[*The others look around.*]

BO-PEEP [*pointing*]: There come Jack and Jill. They'll go up the hill to fetch a pail of water!

[*Jack and Jill enter at left, swinging their pail. The children run to meet them.*]

POLLY FLINDERS [*ahead*]:

Jack and Jill,
Go up the hill
To fetch a pail of water!

JACK AND JILL: What for?

POLLY FLINDERS: To put Nanny Etticoat out.

ALL [*pointing*]:

Nanny Etticoat
In a white petticoat
And a red nose;
The longer she lives,
The shorter she grows!

[*Nanny Etticoat slumps down a little lower.*]

JACK AND JILL: All right!

TOMMY TUCKER: Hurry!

[*Jack and Jill run out at right. Children dance about Nanny Etticoat.*]

ALL: Now we'll soon have you put out, Nanny Etticoat!

[*Jack and Jill run in at right. Jack falls down, pulling Jill down after him. There should be a little water in their pail to spill out.*]

JACK [*sitting up and rubbing his head*]:

I fell down
And broke my crown!

JILL [*sitting up and putting two fingers into her mouth*]:

And I came tumbling after!

[*The others run to help them up. Jack and Jill run limping out at left. As soon as they have gone, the children gather about the pail, righting it and looking into it.*]

BOY BLUE: There isn't a drop left in it!

PETER, PETER: Nary a drop!

[*Meanwhile, Simple Simon has entered at right, set his pail on the floor near the back of the stage and somewhat to the right, settled himself on a stone, and fallen to fishing.*]

TOMMY TUCKER [*pointing*]: There is Simple Simon fishing.

[*All run over to Simple Simon.*]

BOY BLUE: What are you fishing for, Simple Simon?

SIMPLE SIMON: A whale.

TOMMY TUCKER: A whale! Where is your water?

SIMPLE SIMON: In ma's pail there.

PETER, PETER:

Simple Simon is a-fishing
For to catch a whale;
All the water he has got
Is in his mother's pail!

CURLY LOCKS: Don't you mind Peter, Peter, Simple Simon.

Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater,
Had a wife and couldn't keep her;
He put her in a pumpkin-shell,
And there he only kept her well.

because she couldn't hear him making fun of her any more!

PETER, PETER [*comically dropping to one knee and putting his hand on his heart*]:

Curly Locks, Curly Locks,
Wilt thou be mine?
Thou shalt not wash the dishes,
Nor yet feed the swine;
But sit on a cushion
And sew a fine seam,
And feast upon strawberries,
Sugar, and cream!

POLLY FLINDERS: The dishes would go unwashed then, and the pigs unfed!

[*Peter, Peter laughs and gets up.*]

BO-PEEP: May we have the water in your pail, Simple Simon?

SIMPLE SIMON: What for?

BO-PEEP: To put Nanny Etticoat out.

ALL [*pointing*]:

Nanny Etticoat
In a white petticoat
And a red nose;
The longer she lives,
The shorter she grows!

[*Nanny Etticoat slips down a little.*]

SIMPLE SIMON: Yah! Take some quick! Take it all! Put her out!

[*Boy Blue and Tommy Tucker snatch up the pail and start to run with it to Nanny Etticoat. At the unexpected lightness of it, they stop to investigate.*]

BOY BLUE AND TOMMY TUCKER: Simple Simon's mother's pail hasn't any water in it!

[*The others crowd around them.*]

POLLY FLINDERS AND PETER, PETER: It's all leaked out through the holes!

[*Boy Blue and Tommy Tucker return the pail to the place where Simple Simon had it, and Simple Simon falls gravely to fishing again.*]

CURLY LOCKS [*holding up her finger*]: Listen!

[*The rest listen. Then all tiptoe over to left entrance and stand there, listening.*]

SUKEY-TAKE-IT-OFF-AGAIN [*just outside left entrance*]:

Polly, put the kettle on,
Polly, put the kettle on,
Polly, put the kettle on,
And let's drink tea.

BO-PEEP: Knock on the door, Boy Blue! Polly-put-the-kettle-on will let us take her teakettle a minute before it boils.

[*Boy Blue raises his fist to knock when Curly Locks pulls his sleeve.*]

CURLY LOCKS: Sh!

POLLY-PUT-THE-KETTLE-ON [*just outside entrance*]:

Sukey, take it off again,
Sukey, take it off again,
Sukey, take it off again,
They're all gone away.

POLLY FLINDERS: Dear, dear! I wonder if they left any water in the teakettle.

[*Polly-put-the-kettle-on and Sukey-take-it-off-again enter at left.*]

BO-PEEP: Was there any water left in the teakettle, Sukey-take-it-off-again?

SUKEY-TAKE-IT-OFF-AGAIN: Hello! Not a drop, Bo-peep.

POLLY-PUT-THE-KETTLE-ON: We had so much company and everybody took two cups of tea and Mistress Sprat took three.

SUKEY-TAKE-IT-OFF-AGAIN: But why do you want to know, Bo-peep? What do you want some water for?

BO-PEEP: To put Nanny Etticoat out.

ALL [*pointing*]:

Nanny Etticoat
In a white petticoat
And a red nose;
The longer she lives,
The shorter she grows!

[*Nanny Etticoat slips down to her knees in her candlestick.*]

POLLY-PUT-THE-KETTLE-ON: My, oh, me! I wish Mistress Sprat had not asked for the third cup!

[*Haymakers enter at right.*]

SUKEY-TAKE-IT-OFF-AGAIN [*pointing*]: There come the Haymakers on their way home from the meadow.

[*All run to meet the Haymakers.*]

POLLY-PUT-THE-KETTLE-ON [*ahead*]: Oh, Mister Haymaker, let us take your bucket a minute, won't you?

HAYMAKERS: What for?

POLLY-PUT-THE-KETTLE-ON: To put Nanny Etticoat out.

ALL [*pointing*]:

Nanny Etticoat
In a white petticoat
And a red nose;
The longer she lives,
The shorter she grows!

[*Nanny Etticoat makes herself a little shorter.*]

HAYMAKER [*with bucket*]: Shucks now, we were that thirsty we drunk up all the water the old woman, who couldn't nohow get her pig she'd bought for a crooked shilling to go over the stile and was affeared she wasn't going to get home come night, brung us from the stream for a wisp of hay to give the cow for a saucer of milk to give the cat to kill the rat to gnaw the rope to hang the butcher to kill the ox

to drink the water to quench the fire to burn the stick to beat the dog to bite master Piggy to get over the stile to get home come night! See! The bucket's empty! [*He tips the bucket up to show them. The Haymakers go on and out at left.*]

POLLY-PUT-THE-KETTLE-ON: It wouldn't do any good to ask Cross-patch for her cup of tea and let it cool, would it?

SUKEY-TAKE-IT-OFF-AGAIN [*shaking her head*]: No!

Cross-patch
Draws the latch,
Sits by the fire to spin;
Takes a cup
And drinks it up,
Then calls her neighbors in!

[*The Old-woman-who-lived-in-a-shoe puts her head in at right.*]

OLD-WOMAN-WHO-LIVED-IN-A-SHOE [*raising and holding her voice on the last syllable of each name, as mothers call their children home*]: E-eb! An-nie! Mary 'Liz'be-eth! Samue-el! John-ny! Mirandy-y! Calista Babe-ette! Lester Lero-oy! Em-my! Ti-dy! William Rando-olph! Po-sy! [*She comes in a few steps.*] Where in creation did them young ones go to with their bowls o' broth? I told them they might eat it out on the toe, but they ain't there now! They'll catch it! E-eb! Ti-dy! Po-sy! Mary 'Liz—

[*Her children troop in at left.*]

EB: I'm coming, ma!

SOME OF THE OTHERS: Here we are, ma! We're coming!

OLD-WOMAN-WHO-LIVED-IN-A-SHOE: Time you were! Where you been?

TWO OR THREE OF HER CHILDREN: Just down Mother Goose Street a piece, ma.

OLD-WOMAN-WHO-LIVED-IN-A-SHOE [*grasping the boy nearest by his collar, hand upraised to whip him*]: Didn't I tell you to stay around the shoe?

SUKEY-TAKE-IT-OFF-AGAIN: Oh, Mistress Old-woman-who-lived-in-a-shoe, please won't you wait a bit? Don't whip your children just yet!

OLD-WOMAN-WHO-LIVED-IN-A-SHOE: Why not?

SUKEY-TAKE-IT-OFF-AGAIN: Let us look in their bowls first, please.

OLD-WOMAN-WHO-LIVED-IN-A-SHOE: What for?

SUKEY-TAKE-IT-OFF-AGAIN: To see if there is any broth left in them to put Nanny Etticoat out.

BOY BLUE, CURLY LOCKS, ETC. [*pointing*]:

Nanny Etticoat
In a white petticoat
And a red nose;
The longer she lives,
The shorter she grows!

[*Nanny Etticoat slips down a little.*]

POLLY-PUT-THE-KETTLE-ON: Oh, say we may have the broth left in Posy's and Tidy's and Calista Babette's and all the others' bowls, Mistress Old-woman-who-lived-in-a-shoe!

TOMMY TUCKER: Say yes, say yes, Mistress Old-woman-who-lived-in-a-shoe!

OLD-WOMAN-WHO-LIVED-IN-A-SHOE: Yes! Yes! If there's any left in them!

HER CHILDREN [*tipping up their bowls*]: We didn't leave a drop, Polly-put-the-kettle-on!

LESTER LEROY: Not a single, solitary drop!

EMMY: Not one!

TIDY: We were so hungry!

WILLIAM RANDOLPH: Ma gave us our broth without any bread!

POSY: Why, we even licked our bowls out, we were so famished!

TOMMY TUCKER [*breaking his bread into three or four pieces and distributing the bits among the children nearest him, who snatch at them and eat them with smacking lips*]: Have some white bread and butter, Posy! Have a piece, Mary 'Liz'beth! Here, Johnny!

PETER, PETER: White bread and butter! Ho, ho! Have some pumpkin pie, Sam! [*He gives his pie to Samuel, who bolts it down greedily.*]

LESTER LEROY [*snatching the last bite out of Samuel's hand*]: Sam, let me have a bite!

OLD-WOMAN-WHO-LIVED-IN-A-SHOE: Posy! Ain't you ashamed o' yourself? I'm surprised at the lot o' you! Great boys and girls like you! Go to bed with you!

[*She soundly whips the one she is holding by the collar and pushes him out at right. Then she seizes the next, whips him, and shoves him out. Some begin to cry. All her children go out pell-mell at right, the Old-woman-who-lived-in-a-shoe whipping left and right. Simple Simon gets knocked off his stone and his pail is overturned. When the Old-woman-who-lived-in-a-shoe has disappeared behind her children, he picks himself up and Curly Locks runs to right his pail for him.*]

CURLY LOCKS [*almost crying*]: Oh, poor Lester Leroy and Annie, and Johnny, and all the rest of them!

PETER, PETER: Caught your whale yet, Simple Simon?

SIMPLE SIMON: I'm not done fishing yet.

CURLY LOCKS: Don't you mind Peter, Peter, Simple Simon. Here's your fishpole.

[*Simple Simon takes his gad and falls to fishing again. Jack and Jill enter at left. Jack has his head in brown paper and one toe tied in a rag. Jill has two fingers in rags and one toe.*]

POLLY-PUT-THE-KETTLE-ON [*running ahead of the others to meet Jack and Jill*]: Hello, Jack! Hello, Jill! What is the matter?

BOY BLUE:

Jack and Jill
Went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water.

TOMMY TUCKER: To put Nanny Etticoat out.

JILL:

Jack fell down
And broke his crown,
And I came tumbling after!

JACK:

Then up I got
And home did trot
As fast as I could caper;
I went to bed
To mend my head
In vinegar and brown paper.

POLLY FLINDERS: How are you now Jack? How are you, Jill?

JACK AND JILL: Oh, we're better, lots.

JILL: Jack doesn't have to stay in bed to mend his head any more.

JACK: Is Nanny Etticoat still growing shorter and shorter?

[*The children nod sorrowfully, turning to look at Nanny Etticoat. She slips down a little lower. Curly Locks bursts into tears. Mary, Mary enters at right.*]

BO-PEEP [*pointing*]: There's Mary, Mary!

PETER, PETER: Where are you going, my pretty maid?

MARY, MARY: Not a-milking, sir, but to water my garden.

JILL:

Mary, Mary,
Quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With cockle-shells,
And silver bells,
And pretty maids all in a row.

MARY, MARY: Oh, nicely, thank you.

BOY BLUE: Perhaps it wouldn't mind going without watering this one evening then!

CURLY LOCKS: Oh, do say it wouldn't mind just this one evening, Mary, Mary!

MARY, MARY: Of course it would mind! The sun has been so hot all day.

[*Simple Simon, meanwhile, has left his rod in his pail and come up near the group around Mary, Mary. At no time does he join the others; he always stands apart, looking on.*]

SIMPLE SIMON [*holding up his hand*]: I felt a drop!

JACK: It's raining, Mary, Mary! You won't need to water your garden now!

MARY, MARY [*looking up*]: Pooh! The sun is out!

A sunshiny shower
Won't last half an hour!

[*Harry puts his head in at left.*]

HARRY:

Rain, rain,
Go away,
Little Harry
Wants to play!

PETER, PETER: Come on out, Harry! You won't get your feet wet! The rain's over. It rained only two drops, anyway!

[*Harry comes in. Mary, Mary goes on. Then she stops and turns.*]

MARY, MARY: Why don't you want me to water my garden just this one evening, Boy Blue?

BOY BLUE: We want to put Nanny Etticoat out with your sprinkling can.

ALL [*but Harry*]:

Nanny Etticoat
In a white petticoat
And a red nose;
The longer she lives,
The shorter she grows!

[*Nanny Etticoat slips down a little lower in her candlestick.*]

MARY, MARY: My cockle-shells would fade and my silver bells would wilt and my pretty maids all in a row would droop their heads. [*She goes on, but calls back just as she goes out at left.*] Why don't you blow Nanny Etticoat out?

[*The children clap their hands and jump up and down. Then all but Simple Simon and Harry form a ring around Nanny Etticoat and each, in turn, blows, each puffing his cheeks out bigger than the last as each fails to blow her out.*]

HARRY: All together! One, two, three, blow!

[*All together blow as hard as they can, but in vain. Nanny Etticoat drops to sitting position.*]

HARRY: One, two, three, again!

[*All blow again in vain. They drop exhausted to their knees on the floor. Jack-be-nimble tumbles in at right with a handspring or a somersault, knocking Simple Simon over.*]

JACK-BE-NIMBLE [*landing on his feet*]: What's up?

THE CHILDREN IN THE RING [*the boys pointing, the girls crying*]:

Nanny Etticoat
In a white petticoat
And a red nose;
The longer she lives,
The shorter she grows!

[*Nanny Etticoat drops her head down into her lap.*]

SIMPLE SIMON [*picking himself up and running excitedly up to Jack-be-nimble*]:

Jack, be nimble!
Jack, be quick!
Jack, jump over
The candlestick!

[*Jack-be-nimble runs and jumps so close to Nanny Etticoat that he appears to jump over her, plucking the flame out of her cap as he jumps and hiding it quickly in his pocket. Nanny Etticoat lifts up her head. Simple Simon watches till Nanny Etticoat raises her head, then he returns to his fishing.*]

ALL [*including Harry, singing and dancing about Nanny Etticoat*]: Hooray for Simple Simon!

Ring around our Nanny,
Better loved than any;
Make gay with laugh and shout
For Jack-be-nimble put her out!
Now our pretty Nanny
Will light us nights a-many;
A while she'll burn her wick
And then we'll call for Jack-be-quick.

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